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THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

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*Dedicated to HENRY EYSTER JACOBS
on the occasion of his Eightieth Birthday*

BY

J. A. W. HAAS, H. OFFERMANN, A. T. W.
STEINHAEUSER, J. C. MATTES
AND C. M. JACOBS



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THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

THE SOUL AND SOCIETY

JOHN A. W. HAAS

One of the peculiar defects in American life is the tendency to decide problems and to answer questions purely upon practical considerations. There exists a prejudice against all theory and doctrine. Because of the lack of thorough search after the foundations of life in truth there is so much uncertainty, so much contradiction and so much drifting. One outstanding example of this is the vacillation between the right of the soul and the claim of society. Both in private and public utterance and action men gravitate to and fro between the demands of the soul and the call of society. What is needed is not merely a philosophical effort to determine the right relation. It is necessary especially for the Christian to endeavor to ascertain the mind of the Spirit in the Scriptures about the soul and then to draw the proper inferences for practise and life from the doctrine of the Word. This will give sureness and clearness to our attitudes and decisions. We shall then not be cast about by every wind of false practical error which is unconscious of the principles involved. After the problem of the soul has been clarified it will be possible to approach the question of society and the relationship of the soul to it. Shall it be soul versus

society, or society versus soul, or shall there be a just balance?

In stating the problem of soul and society it might be inferred that this was the usual question of the individual and society. When put into the terms of opposites it would be defined as the problem of individualism or socialism. But all such conclusions are unwarranted. They rest upon the identification of the soul with the individual, and substitute a philosophical term for a scriptural word. An examination of the usage of soul in the Bible and particularly in the New Testament will lead us to a clear idea of the just Christian conception of the soul and its difference from the philosophical notion of the individual.

The fundamental passage upon which the Biblical idea is of the soul is built up is found in Genesis 2:7. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." The origin of the soul is traced back to the life of God. The picture of the breathing of life into man is found not only in the Hebrew word "Ruach," but also in the Greek and Latin terms for soul. The soul is the gift of the life of God. "Living" and "Soul" are synonymous. There is no indication of the individuation of the life of God in man. Man is a living soul through the breath of God. This statement determines the origin of man's soul but not its separateness and independence. It rather stresses the dependence upon God. Further light is thrown upon this dependence through the conception of Paul, who draws this contrast: "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." (I Cor. 15:45). The living soul is not the life-giving spirit. It is natural and has

no life in itself, but is derived from the spirit. The spirit is the permanent essential life, the soul is the derived life.

There is no identification of soul with spirit in the careless manner in which we often use the terms interchangeably. The whole man is designated by Paul as spirit, soul and body (I Thess. 5:23). The spirit has the precedence; and it is followed first by the soul and then by the body. The life-given soul is distinct from the life-giving spirit. The author of Hebrews (4:12) conceives the Word of God as dividing asunder soul and spirit. He sees them in the unity of life and yet as separate. The power of the Word of God penetrates so deeply that spirit and soul stand apart. There is no confusion as to soul and spirit in the New Testament. The terms are words of evaluation in the light of religion, and not distinctly formulated technical terms of descriptive psychology. We must enter into the broad apperceptions of faith to understand them.

Apparently there is some psychological color in the injunction to love God with all the heart, the soul and the mind (Matt. 22:37). In Mark (12:30) we find the same statement with the addition: "With all thy strength." But a variation occurs in Mark 12:33. It reads: "With all thy heart, and with all thy understanding, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength." It seems evident that the heart stands for the emotional in man, the mind or the understanding for the intellectual, and the strength for the active growing out of the volitional. But what then does the soul mean? It has no accurate psychological meaning, but is the generic total for the life of man. We must not look in these great religious truths for any fixed scientific delimitation, for the broadly human is meant

which is permanent in all scientific changes and is therefore fit to convey permanent religious truth.

There is a usage of soul which makes it equal to living being. If we read passages like Ex. 12:15; Rom. 2:9, 13:1; Acts 2:41, 43; 7:14; I Peter 3:20; Rev. 16:3, 18:13, we cannot arrive at any other conclusion but that soul stands for the whole human being as a living entity. The emphasis is upon man as living and in no wise as a living individual. The idea of a separate life is purely incidental and not the central idea of this usage.

The strongest accent in the word soul is, however, put upon life as inward. The promise to the servant of God, quoted in Matthew 12:18 from Isaiah, of the gift of the Spirit, is motivated thus: "In whom my soul is well pleased." The very life of God, His very being, is designated as soul. It is this spiritual meaning of soul which clearly separates it from the body. Man is not to fear those who can only destroy the body, but Satan who can ruin soul and body. (Matt. 10:28). There is a supremacy of the value of the soul, the vital inner existence, which makes it to rank far above the perishable body. Still greater is the worth of the inner life over against the whole world of things. (Matt. 12:26; Mark 8:36). Any selfish attempt to preserve mere life as over against the life found in Christ, any effort to save the soul and not lose it in order to win it in Jesus, is futile. (Matt. 16:25). These high estimates are not the emancipation of the modern individual with his own desire and will, but the magna charta of the inner life valued in its divine aspect. The soul is given the highest worth as inner life not in any intellectual or æsthetic sense, but as the life of religious thought, aspiration and action with its moral responsibility. This

conception of soul is adumbrated in Lev. 5:17 in the words: "If a soul sin." But its first great declaration is found in Ezekiel 18:20, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." As against the guilt of heredity the guilt of life in the guilty one is stressed. This truth does not abolish the results of sin from generation to generation as a fact, but it removes inherited guilt and responsibility. The moral value of soul—life is rescued and not its bare individuality. The individuality is secondary to the moral valuation. We have no brief here for the individual as an individual, but only a law of the moral right for the soul.

The soul is frequently regarded as the life of inward religious and spiritual nature. This places it far above the body and its needs. The fine sarcasm of Jesus in portraying the man, who planned to build larger barns, as saying to his soul: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry" (Luke 12:19), rests upon the foolish confusion of what the soul, the inner spiritual life, needs. It cannot be satisfied with the outward pleasures and delights of the body. The soul is a far different life than that of sense. The expression "save your soul" (Jas. 1:21; 5:20) or "salvation of your souls" (I Peter 1:9) has become very common, and it is due to this that the misconception has arisen that salvation of the soul means rescue of individuality. The charge has frequently been brought that care for the salvation of one's soul is naught else but disguised selfishness which does not care either for the temporal or eternal welfare of one's neighbor. But this whole misapprehension is due to the failure to note that the soul is man's highest spiritual part, and that its salvation, effected by God's love, and received by faith in Christ, eventuates in genuine

love to God and man. A saved soul and selfishness are contradictions which can only be avoided, as they must be true to the whole conception of salvation, if the idea of the soul be freed altogether from the implications of modern individualism.

The high spiritual valuation of the soul is found all through the New Testament in many different forms and connections. The praise of Mary: "My soul doth magnify the Lord" (Luke 1:46) cannot be understood except the soul be the life kindled by the spirit. When Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane prays: "My soul is sorrowful unto death" (Matt. 26:38; Mark 14:34) He feels the power of death attacking His inmost life in its totality. The same sense for soul obtains when Jesus prays: "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say?" (John 12:27). When Simeon tells Mary that a sword shall pierce her soul (Luke 2:35) he thinks of the highest religious hopes and expectations of her inner life. What part of man's life but his inner religious strivings will find rest when he comes to Jesus, takes the yoke upon him and learns of the Christ (Matt. 11:29). In the tribulation of the last days men can have patience if they possess their souls in it. (Luke 21:19). The endurance of patience is within the deepest, secret places of our spiritual life.

The same import is given to the idea of the soul when those that rule in the Church are to watch over the souls (Hebr. 13:17), and when hope is spoken of as the anchor of the soul (Hebr. 6:19). The obedience to the truth purifies the soul (I Peter 1:22). It can overcome the fleshy lusts that war against it (I Peter 2:11), but it needs the Shepherd and Bishop of souls. (I Peter 2:25). It is the soul which is righteous and is vexed by unlawful deeds (II Peter 2:8). When men are led

astray and beguiled it is because they have "unstable souls." (II Peter 2:14). The real prosperity is the prosperity of the soul. (III John 2). Even the vision of those who are kept by God after their persecutions for the last day is the vision of souls. (Rev. 6:9; 20:4).

Another and very interesting light is cast upon the Biblical usage of soul in the description of the early Church in Jerusalem, when Luke writes: "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul." (Acts 4:32). The oneness of heart is the binding power of common Christian love which united the first Christians. But there was a deeper unity than that apparent in the exhibition of love. It was the oneness of inner life in Christ toward whom believers turned in the actuality of one interrelated and unified soul. There was a real communal soul into which the separate believers were fused. We in our day of disjointed Christianity have no conception of this oneness of spiritual life and truth. It was the greatest created social unity and it was brought about by the Spirit of God. Natural social unities have no such ties. Unities created through education, culture, art, science, literature of which men boast are in a different class. The soul of the Jerusalem church was vital and actual. It dare not be turned into a mere figure of speech. If this fact is accepted then we realize that the soul as God-given life is not merely focalized in separate beings but also in the social form of the Church.

The result of our examination of the Biblical usage of soul has led us to the following conclusions:

- (1) The soul is life imparted to man by the Spirit of God, but it does not make man a part of God.

- (2) Sometimes the whole living man is called soul and consequently life and soul are at times used synonymously.
- (3) The soul can be focalized in the individual but it does not essentially mean individuality.
- (4) The most frequent sense of soul is the inner spiritual life directed toward God.
- (5) The soul is a fact of religious evaluation found by faith and not a descriptive fact of scientific psychology, but this makes it none the less real.
- (6) The soul can be applied to the inner unity of the life of the Church created by the Spirit.

From this summary it becomes evident why soul cannot be identified with self or individuality. There are at least three great contrasts between soul and self which appear in the comparison of individualistic systems of thought with the scriptural idea of soul.

First, in the usual individualistic philosophy there is no definite assertion of God as the creator and preserver of life, absolute and infinite in nature. The most widely spread modern individualism is the hypothesis of pluralism. According to it the ultimate centers of existence are entities material, mental and neutral. The world is simply a collection of separate minute particles. Of these man is one. God is only somewhat higher but He is finite, the great companion, the invisible king. All centers of existence, all minute entities are simply given, but they are not created, nor do they depend upon God as does the soul for its origin and continuance. While God is not denied He is virtually annulled in His real creative and preservative power and infinity. It is true that the earliest individualist of the nineteenth century, the German thinker Leibnitz, does affirm God as creator and makes Him

the infinite monad. But there are millions of finite monads thoroughly independent in their existence. God winds up the clocks of the universe and they run parallel with exactitude, but He, the maker, abandons the world to itself. To maintain the independence of the finite individualities God is denied as the actual preserver and governor of the universe. But this denial infringes on God's creative power as continuous. Whenever God is limited as being in the world He made there He is limited in His creative power. Consequently even Leibnitz injures the right conception of God as absolute creator. Creation, preservation and governance of the world by God belong together. The limitation or denial of any one of these functions finally affects all. Consequently even the best form of individualism in human thought injures the true conception of God. It is altogether different from the idea of the soul which depends upon God for its creation and continuance, and longs to return to God, not to be absorbed into Him, but to live in His presence.

The second conflict between individualism and the soul is found in the fact that the commonly accepted individualistic theory has no place for man's sin. It regards the individual in his mere existence as right. We are only to develop our individuality and to live out what is in us as potency and possibility to be justified. In many modern experiments in education, particularly with the youngest children, this individualism is the underlying thought. The child is supposed to find itself and to choose the right things like the calf finds its food. All that the child needs is guidance and not correction, and even the guidance must be indirect. The scriptural idea of the soul does not imply that the soul though made by God remained perfect. It must be

saved because it is lost. The lower life must be surrendered to keep the true life. The soul is in a constant battle against sin and needs the Saviour because it does not make and save itself as modern individualism claims. The teaching of the soul in the Bible altogether contradicts the natural perfection and development theory of modern individualistic thinking.

The third difference between individualism and the soul consists in the fact, that the individual or self is independent and its relation to society is very secondary, while the soul is not inherently anti-social in its idea. It is in this distinction that we need the most careful discrimination, because it has been obscured so often. According to individualistic thought society is a mere addition of individuals in certain relations with each other. There is no real social life and thought apart from individual existence. The world of men is an atomistic structure loosely held together. No such separative conceptions lurk in the idea of the soul. The soul as such is not necessarily individual. The life coming from God finds lodgment through His gift in individuals, but His life also dwells in the social form of the Church in a very special way through the presence of His Spirit. To deny this is to deny the inner life of the Church and to make it a mere collection of believing individuals. There is no room then for the action of the Spirit of Truth upon the whole body of the Church. If we conceive of the divine life as found only in the self we cannot really maintain the Church in its full value. But the Spirit that brooded upon the face of the deep in the creation of the world also made the Church in its beginnings of one soul.

The idea of the life of the Spirit in the Church is the connecting link between the soul and society. But it is

also necessary to see how far the modern thought of society is implied in the New Testament. It is evident that the present form of the social outlook is not found in the Bible. Just as little as we can quote scripture for the conception of individuality, so little can it be cited for society which means the interrelationship of men. There is no philosophic defense of the links that bind us to a family and a nation, and no explanation that we could not develop without the social inheritance of language, culture, tradition, custom, law and other similar social media. Nevertheless the social concept is not wanting.

The fundamental Christian attitudes and virtues, faith, love and hope are not possible in their fulness without creating social bonds. While faith is the trust of a soul in Christ it unites a believing soul with others who hold the faith, and finds expression in a common confession. Faith is not only the reliance of an individual upon God, but it is always creative of social results. It helps to make a social form. Love lives not only from man to God but from man to man. It is the great outcome of faith and the primary virtue of the Christian life that regards others. Christianity of the pure New Testament type rests the only efficient social life upon love as applied to all social relations. A sound society can only be brought about where love obtains. There can be no successful social theory and no comfortable social life without the religious conception of love and its moral application. The Christian hope seems at first to be only the anchor of one soul but in reality hope is just as common as faith, and it needs the contact and warmth of social relation as does faith. Hope is also our hope and becomes the stronger as we realize its connective and binding power. We cannot

therefore escape the social complex as soon as we thoughtfully consider what faith, love and hope mean and effect.

The New Testament brings to our consciousness the fact that the Church is a living social form. It is a real body (Eph. 4:4), and actual organism and not a self-constituted society. For this reason the believers are one soul because there is one life of Christ and of the Spirit, and one God and Father, in the Church through the one faith. When the Church is compared to a temple (Eph. 2:20 ff.), the idea is not that of an organization artificially built up, but the thought is that of a growing and cemented unity of souls fused in love and resting upon the living cornerstone, Jesus Christ. In the Church we have to do with a social reality, a rock structure in history, not made by man nor destructible through him no matter what he does. This inner, permanent social unity of spiritual life is necessary to the individual. Into it he is born in the newness of life in Christ. We are not baptized to receive the divine gift simply as individuals, but we are baptized into one body. (I Cor. 12:13). Our new birth through water and the spirit is incorporation into the living body of Christ, the Church. We are grafted into a social living unity, and we are not simply taken into an organization by vote. The latter procedure is external, but baptism is a process of life joining us to Christ and the Church. The same social life-process is present in the Communion. We do not partake of the Lord's Supper merely as individuals who receive the body and blood of the Lord for our own forgiveness of sins, but we are also, though being many, "one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of the one bread." (I Cor. 10:17). The Communion is not only a communion with the body

and blood of Christ but also with each other. It increases the unity and inner strength of the Church. While it is a confession of oneness it at the same time increases the bonds that unite believers in faith and love and hope. We often fail to realize this underlying social ideal in the Church and the sacraments, but it is clearly present. Its foundation is in the notion of life, and thus it reaches back to the concept of the soul which is essentially life.

There exists in the teaching of Jesus one term which modern interpreters have endeavored to interpret largely if not altogether in a social sense. It is the term Kingdom of God, or kingdom of heaven as reported by Matthew. Apparently the idea of the Kingdom of God was in common usage in Christ's day and expressed some ideal as democracy does with us. The Jews constantly expected the unrealized kingdom to come and to be fulfilled. It meant a new age, a golden period, of political power, preëminence and independence; a new social order of perfection and happiness. Its coming was fastened to the hope of the great deliverer, the anointed King, the world Jew and yet the outstanding nationalist. But it would be wrong to derive the ideal of Jesus from these hopes of His times. They were external and supposed to be effected through human leadership and effort even though God was not denied a share. The teaching of Jesus was in conflict with these ruling tendencies and opposed them. He took the prevalent idea of the kingdom and gave it a new content and a new force. Consequently we must study it in His own words which were not colored by His age. He is in His times but not of them.

What is the central idea of the Kingdom of God in the mind of Jesus? Many passages describe the con-

ditions of entrance into the kingdom, and give its qualities and outline, its history and hope; but what is the real starting point for its development? It seems best to find the key to the meaning of the Kingdom of God in the Lord's Prayer. The petition: "Thy kingdom come" is followed and apparently explained by the prayer: "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matt. 6:10). It is interesting to note that in the parallel passage of Luke (11:2) the best manuscripts omit the petition for the doing of God's will. Whether this was the earlier form or another form of the Lord's Prayer we do not know, but it at least indicates that the doing of the will of God was implied in the desire for the coming of the kingdom. We may therefore venture to interpret the kingdom as that ideal condition upon earth when God's will is done. The Kingdom of God depends upon His will. This makes it His kingdom, His realm and rule. But what is to bring about this kingdom, is the first question.

Men cannot enter into it nor begin in any way to approach the doing of God's will without the condition of repentance. The very first announcement of the coming of the kingdom was a call to repentance. (Matt. 3:2; 4:27; Mark 1:15). The attitude of the heart of men was to be one of sorrow for their past failure to do God's will. The call was not only to the individual, but also to different classes of society. (Luke 3:10). There was demanded a change of heart in the direction of individual responsibility and of social duty. Without the realization of sin, the transgression of divine law, it was utterly impossible for the new age to begin. But the call to repentance was immediately connected with the request for faith. (Mark 1:15). Faith was to accept the gospel, the good news of the kingdom. No

qualification of the gospel is more frequent than the gospel of the kingdom (Matt 4: 23; 9: 35; 10: 7; 13: 19; 26: 14; Mark 1: 14; Luke 4: 43; 8: 1; 9: 2, 11, 60; Acts 8: 12; 19: 8; 20: 25). The first and great purpose of Jesus was the glad announcement of the actualization of the kingdom by the way of faith. But faith was to be created through the message of the kingdom, *i. e.* the gospel. It was therefore not accidental that Jesus began His teaching about the kingdom in parables with the parable of the sowing of the seed and the requirement of its reception in the right soil of the heart.

The message of the kingdom has no political end nor purpose. Jesus could therefore tell Pilate with all honesty that His kingdom was not of this world (John 18: 36) when He was accused. There was no word nor act of Jesus that could have any political meaning, and not even His entry into Jerusalem was capable of such a construction. The whole ideal was spiritual. It was this lack of spiritual conception of the kingdom which made it so difficult for Nicodemus to understand the teaching of the new birth. Jesus maintains that it is impossible to enter the kingdom except one be born again of the water and the spirit. (John 3: 3, 5). There must be a totally new life through repentance and faith, a life wrought by God. The God that gave the soul must through the same Spirit create the twice-born life. No mere reform or change of attitude that does not proceed from an inner, actual new life can bring us into unity with the divine will and establish the Kingdom of God upon earth. Whatever individual or social change is to be wrought cannot come from without or by human resolution. It must be the result of a new inner life.

The first and prime character of the Kingdom of God when realized in men is righteousness. Nothing in all

human life is so essential as righteousness. Without it all else is vain, but to those possessing it all other things shall be added. (Matt. 6:33; Luke 12:31). There can be no seeking of the kingdom which is not the desire for righteousness. Upon it rest individual life and social order, and through it God's will is fulfilled, but this righteousness must be genuine and dare not consist in mere external observances and in a mechanical, outward keeping of the law. (Matt. 5:20). It is an utter mistake to hope that the kingdom will come through any human effort and scheme of restriction, laws and ceremonies. Beginning from within it must remain within (Luke 17:20, 21). No abstention from meat and drink, no religious taboo, is its evidence. It has its source in inward "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. 14:17). The mystical gift of righteousness will produce the right life. Consequently no one who is addicted to any sin can inherit the blessings of the kingdom and be a member of it. (I Cor. 6:9; Gal. 5:2; Eph. 5:5). The order of the kingdom of righteousness demands that its leaders be instructed so that they can guide men through both the old way and the new. (Matt. 13:52). But those in the old way are not in the kingdom, except there be entire newness of life. This makes even the least in the kingdom greater than John the Baptist who was the greatest prophet. (Matt. 11:11; Luke 7:28). And while God's Spirit brings the kingdom it is needful for men to press toward it as though with force and violence. The law and the prophecies end with John the Baptist, and a new condition and a new life prevails. (Matt. 11:12, 13; Luke 16:16).

The first but not exclusive program of the kingdom is revealed by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. The

initial beatitude is for those who are poor and righteous. The limitation of their outward resources must be accompanied with poverty of spirit. (Matt. 5:3 cf. Luke 6:20; Jas. 2:5). It is in keeping with this requirement that such fear is expressed in Jesus' later teaching, lest the rich in worldly goods may lose the kingdom. (Matt. 19:23; Mark 10:23 ff.; cf. Luke 16:19). It is necessary, so teaches the Lord in the Sermon on the Mount, through the new righteousness to keep the least of the commandments (Matt. 5:19); and blessing and happiness belongs to those, who are ready for actual righteousness to suffer persecution. (Matt. 5:10). All society is salted through those in the kingdom and kept from decay. (Matt. 5:13). They are the light in the darkness of the world. (Matt. 5:14). All the old commandments are kept in their inner spirit and not according to the letter. Hate and anger are avoided for they are the source of murder. (Matt. 5:21 ff.). Lust of the eye before any action is the beginning of adultery. (Matt. 5:27 ff.). These laws are kept from within, and there is no effort to camouflage the oath. (Matt. 5:33 ff.). Life is to be controlled by love, forgiveness toward enemies, overcoming of hate, non-resistance over against violence, willingness to help one's neighbor in need without hope of returns. (Matt. 5:38-48). While these injunctions are to be exercised first from individual to individual there lies in them also the vision of a perfect society. In it there is to be no unjust judgment of men, no boastful almsgiving, no hypocrisy, no love and anxiety for worldly needs, but love of God, genuine charity, true, continuous, earnest prayer, real fruitfulness of life in holy action and not in idle words. (Matt. 6, 7 cf. I Cor. 4:20). This is a marvelous program which would create an entirely new society and

a social order without friction and evil. Of the same nature with this first program is the ideal of humility, honesty, and child-like simplicity which Jesus commends in the example of children. (Matt. 18:1 ff.; 1:14; Mark 10:14; Luke 18:16, 17).

The individual ought to seek the kingdom as the most precious thing; it is the greatest treasure, the priceless pearl. (Matt. 13:44, 45). Its obligations depend upon the varieties and measure of the gifts that God has given to men, but all can and must bring some returns in a religious and moral life, and multiply their endowments. (Matt. 25:14 ff.; Luke 19:11 ff.). But individual gifts and duties cannot obscure the fact that men are together in the kingdom and have social contacts and relations. Although in the parable of the vineyard men as individuals are paid in the evening, the whole day they labor together. (Matt. 20:1 ff.). In the marriage feast the king inspects his guests one by one, and yet they are called not merely singly but in a group. (Matt. 22:2 ff.). The wheat and the tares grow in one field and interlace until the harvest. (Matt. 13:24 ff.). All of these pictures show that the kingdom has a social side and that the teaching of Christ is not only directed toward individuals. The social aspect is also present when Jesus foretells how the Jews lose the kingdom and the Gentiles enter in. (Matt. 8:11, 12; Luke 13:28, 29).

The ideal life will not come quickly and the fulfillment of the perfect social order cannot be expected in time. We must wait in patience until the end of time to eradicate evil. (Matt. 13:24 ff.). But despite the constant presence of evil and the impossibility of removing it from the world, the kingdom grows from a small beginning (Matt. 13:31; Mark 4:26, 30; Luke

13:18), and its power gradually permeates human society. (Matt. 13:33; Luke 13:20). It comes as a mystery not understood by the mass of men, but still it comes and grows quietly like a seed. (Matt. 13:11; Mark 4:11; Luke 8:10).

The kingdom cannot be completed in time because of human sin and the power of the Evil One. It will find its fruition in the world to come. Then the wheat and tares shall be separated and the tares burnt. (Matt. 13:30); then the worthless fish caught in the net will be thrown away. (Matt. 13:49). When the door is opened into the kingdom to come those who are prepared will enter in. (Matt. 25: 1 ff.). The promise of the Lord's Supper will be fulfilled when Christ drinks anew of the fruit of the vine. (Matt. 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:16, 18, 29, 30). This kingdom will be the reward after all tribulation (Acts 14:22), the great final perfection and glory for men who are saved. (I Cor. 15:24, 50; II Tim. 4:1, 18; Rev. 12:10).

The examination of the idea of the Kingdom of God has shown us that its central thought is the reign of the will of God in individual lives and in society. The great fundamental demand is righteousness which is defined as a new spirit of love in humility, simplicity, forgiveness, liberality, charity, non-resistance, kindness, child-likeness, honesty, desire for high ideals of truth and honest worship of God. The whole idea for man centers in a new life. There is thus an inner connection between the soul and society.

There is no foundation for a social philosophy in the teaching of Jesus and his apostles which makes society the one fact to the detriment of the individual. As little as the conception of the soul favored modern individualism, so little does the Kingdom of God lend it-

self as the vehicle of many modern social theories. In the Bible there is a just balance between the individual and society, and no trace can be found of any one-sided individualism or socialism. We cannot call in the teaching of Jesus to underpin the modern claim that society is merely a part of nature, the last result of its process. Such a theory makes righteousness an outcome of biological inheritance, and sin the unfortunate effect of heredity and environment. Everywhere man's specific spiritual nature, his destiny for moral action and for God is presumed in the Scriptures. It opposes all biologic conceptions of man in his spiritual aspect whether as a self or as society.

Another modern error finds no place in the New Testament, namely the idea that without God through human endeavor we can bring about an ideal society. There is no possibility of the kingdom without repentance, faith and the new life from above. The kingdom will never come through human art, literature, science, or any human culture even though it be of the highest and best type. All humanitarianism, all human philanthropy, all philosophic moral endeavor cannot create the perfect order. The tares will constantly grow and the devil will always be at work in the kingdom and much more outside of its influences. Utopias have often been dreamed about since the days of Plato, but they have never been realized. As long as there is sin so long righteousness will not prevail, and therefore we need the hope of the future.

In much modern theology there is a tremendous stress upon the kingdom in this present life. We are told to give up our expectation of the future and to labor to make the present better. While all honest moral effort growing out of the ideals of Jesus are to be encouraged,

it is a proud and boastful spirit that claims that it will accomplish what Jesus foretold was impossible of accomplishment in time. It is our duty relying upon the Christ to further every betterment of men but we must not contradict His soberness supported by the facts of social life.

It is an equally mistaken notion that outward improvement of human conditions in health and housing, in food and clothing, in commercial and industrial relations, and in just economic balance and equability, will usher in the kingdom. The kingdom will not come with any such observances. If it could come more fully it would produce all the changes desired as far as they affect man's soul. But the soul and society will not be helped by any external nostrum. Let men continue their striving until the wise see that not by might nor strength nor human wisdom can we be saved, but only through the Christ and His Spirit.

Many good Christians think that they can produce an ideal social condition through the enactment and enforcement of law. The kingdom is of the Spirit and He can lead us to do God's will if we will. No law of God as law ever made saints but only produced sinners through the reaction of human disobedience. If God's law, which was holy, just and good, could not improve man what can we expect of defective human law. Law is necessary in human government for the restraint of evil and the sake of order, but it cannot create righteousness.

The New Testament teaching on the soul and on the Kingdom of God valuable as it is in itself, is important if applied in our day to a variety of ethical questions. The conception of the inner spiritual life of the soul, and the idea of the Kingdom of God's will, are two

principles that permit us through their balance to eliminate the extremes of individualism and socialism, and to find the right direction for the solution of moral perplexities. The two problems in which we can test the applicability of the soul and the kingdom very clearly are the problems of Sunday observance and of prohibition. Both of these questions are prominently before us today, and in both even Christians are not guided by the moral inferences found in the great scriptural ideas of the soul and the will of God. We need the clarifying of many wrong notions and actions through the clear implications of New Testament truth.

In the question of Sunday there are two ruling considerations. Sunday observance is a religious question of the Church and a legal problem of the State. With the sphere of the State and what it owes to Christians in the protection of their religious rights we are not concerned here. There is a distinct duty of the State which has enacted laws of rest and forbidden business, but we must not confuse this with the religious obligation. The State must not hinder nor control the religious rights, and the Church must not impose upon the State its distinctive religious demands apart from the claim to unhampered and unrestricted freedom of worship. The confusion of the different functions of the Church and State has complicated the problem from its religious angle where individualism and socialism have already wrought havoc, but we shall adhere purely to the religious motive of this problem.

There is a religious individualism which endeavors to settle the Sunday question purely on the claim of individual choice. It has adopted the purely selfish notion of liberty from sources outside of Christianity and then endeavored to change the liberty of the nat-

ural and uncontrolled man into a religious right but without success. To this end it has abused the saying of Jesus that the Sabbath was made for man. It has taken man in the natural sense and not man as a soul. When we understand the supremacy of the soul and its great difference from individuality we can no longer stand for the individualistic conception of Sunday. We know that the soul is the highest gift of God to man, and that its needs must be considered. The problem of Sunday in religion is the problem of the necessity of a day for the special culture of the soul. Because the culture of the soul must have the message of the gospel of the kingdom, therefore it must have such arrangements of every kind including a time as are necessary for the proclamation of the message. This is the true logic which does not depend upon any individual views of Sunday and what it ought to be, and what one ought to do or not do on Sunday. The necessity for the soul to know God's gracious will which brings the kingdom cannot be evaded. Both from the point of view of the soul and the kingdom the individualistic attitude stands condemned.

But the condemnation of the individualistic position does not carry with it the approval of the idea that society shall dictate what Sunday must be. There are ruling notions among American Christians of a legal sort that would control the soul and turn the gospel of Jesus into a new law. The legalizing of Sunday has been as bad as its liberalizing. The Old Testament has been injected into the Christian Lord's Day. There have been social attitudes in the Church that belong to the State. The governmental regulation of Judaism has been wrongly imported and its nationalism denied. The Judaizing Christians have not been willing to adopt the

whole law but they have accepted in principle and application the social ideal of the Sabbath which in its origin was both religious and national. Unconsciously therefore the legal restrictions of an ancient state are made religious duties in the world religion of Christianity. The idea of the soul is in conflict with the legal social notion because its need as life is not met through law. It is equally impossible to interpret the will of God in the kingdom as law. This will in the kingdom must be interpreted as the free doing of what God wants in a new life of righteousness and love. The ideals of the kingdom are not enactments to be obeyed, but ends to be achieved through a life of faith, love and hope. The Church which is an aid to the kingdom is not an organization to pass laws, but a living organism to evidence the life of Christ through His Spirit. It ought not be an instrument to make Sunday laws, but only an interpreter of the will of God for the salvation of souls. Consequently there is no room for any social notions of Sunday control that contradict the conception of the soul and the kingdom.

The problem of prohibition can be approached in the same way as the Sunday question. There are two tendencies which from the religious point of view cannot lead to a solution. The first is the individualism which misconstrues liberty. It claims the right of what is known as "evangelical liberty." True evangelical liberty refuses to permit the imposition of any law as mere law as essential to Christian life, but when applied to the right in indulging in spirituous liquors it becomes a defense of the desires and appetites of the natural man. It is true that we dare not call any gift of God evil. There often lurks a hidden condemnation of matter in certain prohibition arguments, and one almost

feels as if there was a repetition of the Manichean speculation. But while we ought to avoid such attitudes we cannot claim that the freedom of the soul in Christ legitimatizes bodily indulgence and furnishes a brief for the use of stimulants. It is quite a degradation of evangelical liberty to turn it in this direction. The fact is that the real motive is not religious but a misapplication of natural, personal liberty. The usual plea for personal liberty is mostly a deceptive hiding of selfishness, which demands one's own right and pleasure regardless of the common liberty of men.

On the other hand the avoidance of individualistic interpretation of freedom over against prohibition does not justify an extreme social position. There are those who on behalf of the Church make the abstinence from intoxicants a matter of church laws and commands. Like the legalistic interpreters of Sunday observance they turn the Church into a master over the conscience, and ask that it condemn those who indulge even moderately in liquor. Of course since prohibition has virtually been made the law of the land the question of obedience to the law of the State enters in. But the Church has no charter to make itself an agent of the State for the observance of any law, even if it is its duty to testify against all lawlessness. Whatever social forces may help toward prohibition it is not the business of the Church as such to be a prosecutor and enforcer of the law strong as must be its testimony against all law-breakers.

If we turn back to the soul we shall find a right basis for our problem. As far as the soul enters our total life any food or drink that injures the body is detrimental to our life. The justification of abstinence from liquor must be found in the established injury it does

to our life. Whatever through a wrong habit and appetite controls us takes away from our inner soul-life of liberty in Christ. The soul as the inward spiritual life must be the final determinant in this question. We must ask in all external matters affecting the body: Is it good for my soul? As souls that are saved for righteousness we dare not make the demand of any bodily appetite an essential. In view of the constant risk in the use of any stimulant, a Christian must determine, whether complete abstinence is not safer for his soul than even the most casual and moderate indulgence which is often the result of imitation and custom.

The idea of the kingdom leads us to the same result. The will of God to be effected upon earth needs the motive of love among men. This motive causes us not to do certain things if our example misleads others. Much as we may resent the pressure of law upon us, we cannot as Christians and children of the kingdom escape the appeal of love. If it is proved that the use of intoxicants is an injury to individuals and society, if it is one of the causes of crime, if it frequently leads to insanity, if it destroys thrift, breaks down homes, makes labor inefficient and endangers life, then love has only one position to take. It will abstain for the sake of others even though the abstainer might be in no danger. This idea has been well defined by Paul, who though he would have no one judge his brother, nevertheless counsels: "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak." (Rom. 14:21). This argument becomes all the stronger when we remember that Paul really thought that meat and drink could be taken even though they were dedicated to the gods. Despite the fact then that a man

was under no restraint if he did not worship the gods, nevertheless he was advised to withhold his right if it offended his brother or caused him to stumble. The principle is that of the kingdom which will never come through the maintenance of rights but through the spirit of love. And this principle gains in weight when the right claimed is not really a right but rather a habit of bodily indulgence. Thus the idea of the kingdom like that of the soul guides us in the right direction and helps us to serve men and regard society without the force of commandment or law.

THE JESUS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

H. OFFERMANN

It was the writer's original intention to discuss in this chapter of our composite volume the New Testament doctrine of the person and work of Christ. However, upon second thought, and after more mature deliberation, it was found that such a doctrinal discussion, in order to be fairly comprehensive and complete, could not be compressed within the compass of the limited space which had been agreed upon in the general outline of this book. Besides, there seemed to be good reasons for adopting a method of treatment which, though it may be less dogmatic, will give more freedom to discuss certain modern issues and questions which have been raised with respect to the person of our Lord in recent years, and which at the present time are agitating the minds of many Christians. We may not be disturbed by the controversy that is raging between fundamentalists and liberalists in other quarters of the Church than our own. But we cannot deny or ignore the fact that modern historical investigation with regard to the origin, authenticity and contents of the New Testament writings has brought about a decided change in the theological and religious situation of the world. It has thrown fresh light upon things that were formerly in darkness, and it has brought to light facts that were hitherto unknown. Yet it has not only solved questions but also raised questions, and some of the questions it has raised are of vital interest to our faith. In view

of this present situation with its unrest and confusion, with its many misunderstandings and misinterpretations, and with the general atmosphere of uncertainty and doubt which it has created, the writer believes it to be one of the most urgent and pressing needs of the day to present to the Christian reader the simple facts upon which our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is founded.

In analyzing the present religious situation we are confronted with the all-important question: Can we still believe in Jesus as our fathers believed in Him? Is the Christ of our faith, the Christ of our Confessions, to whom we sing our songs of praises, in whom we believe and in whom we put our trust for time and eternity, whom we worship as the Only-begotten Son of the Father, "God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God,"—is this Christ of our faith the same as the Jesus of history?

The answer to this question depends entirely upon the New Testament. As we all know, the New Testament, properly speaking, is not a book, but a collection of books. These books originated in the first Christian century, and they are accepted by all Christians and all Christian Churches as the rule and standard of their faith and life. They occupy therefore a unique place in the religious literature of the world, and their chief characteristic lies in the peculiar relation to the historical person of our Lord Jesus Christ. The believing Christian recognizes in the person and work of Christ the final and absolute revelation of God himself. (Cf. Mark 1:15; Luke 4:21; Gal. 4:4; Hebr. 1:1; I Peter 1:20; John 1:17). This gives us at once a firm basis for our discussion. Whatever we may think of the New Testament writings as literature, their principal re-

ligious value for us is determined by the fact that they bear testimony to the revelation of God in our Lord Jesus Christ.

The precise relationship existing between the New Testament writings and the revelation of God in Christ can be expressed in a threefold statement.

A. The writings of the New Testament are, first of all, the clear and authentic *records* of God's revelation in our Lord Jesus Christ, and they hold this position because they are the literary product of the very time and generation by which that revelation was received. There may be, and there are, many other books that deal with the revelation of God in Christ. But the twenty-seven books of the New Testament Canon are the only writings in which God's revelation in Christ has been preserved and transmitted to us.

B. In the next place, the writings of the New Testament are not only the records of God's revelation, but because of this very fact they are also *an integral part of that revelation itself*. Essential to the idea of revelation is not only the note of historicity, but also the note of universality. Insofar as God's revelation centers and culminates in the historical person of Jesus Christ, it belongs to the past and is limited by the limitations of space and time. But the writings of the New Testament bring the past down to the present; they make God's revelation accessible to all. As the records of God's revelation in Christ the New Testament writings deal with the historical Jesus. But as the means and channels through which God's present revelation is poured into our hearts, they bring us face to face with the living Christ so that we behold his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

C. Finally, in recording, and transmitting to us, the

historical facts that constitute the revelation of God in Christ, the authors of the New Testament writings also become the *authentic interpreters* of that revelation. They state the facts, but their statement of facts is always connected with an interpretation by which the true meaning of God's revelation in Christ is made clear and safeguarded against all error and misunderstanding. This interpretation is particularly conspicuous in the Epistles of Paul. For example, there were many Christians in the early days of the Church who knew and could tell the story of the Cross. But it was left to Paul to explain in his letters the full meaning of that story. Thus Paul became the one great interpreter of Jesus. But even the Gospels are not only historical records of Jesus' life, but also an interpretation of His life and work. This is pre-eminently true of the Gospel of John. But it applies also to the first three Gospels. Each of our four Evangelists is not only a reporter but also an editor, not only a recorder of facts but also an interpreter.

II

From the fundamental position taken by us in the statements just made, it follows that the Jesus of the New Testament is primarily the Christ of our faith. But it also follows that this Christ of our faith is identical with the Jesus of history. The question may be asked whether there are any other literary sources from which our historical knowledge of Jesus is derived, besides the New Testament writings. The question itself is of interest, but it is not of great importance, and it can be answered in a few words.

Occasional references to the origin and early history of Christianity are found in the writings of Josephus,

the Jewish historian, and of the Roman writers, Tacitus, Suetonius, and the younger Pliny. But these references give us no information whatever concerning the life and ministry of our Lord, and for our present purpose we may disregard them altogether. Some value may be attributed to the statement made by the Roman writer Tacitus, that the founder of Christianity was put to death by Pontius Pilate under the reign of Tiberius, but that the religious movement inaugurated by Him, after it had been suppressed, later revived and spread, not only throughout Judæa, but also to the capital itself. Such a statement may help to establish the fact that the founder of Christianity is not a mythical figure, but an historical person. But the reader of the New Testament needs no proof to that effect, and the mythical theory has been abandoned even by the most radical scholar who has not entirely lost his mind.

Of the twenty-seven books of which the New Testament Canon is composed, the four Gospels deal exclusively with the Lord's life and ministry. But we find in the ancient Church a number of similar writings which were not received into the Canon of the New Testament, and are known as apocryphal Gospels. Most of them were designed to fill important gaps in the Lord's life, and especially to furnish information concerning the early years of His life, on which our canonical Gospels are silent. All these apocryphal Gospels, however, although undoubtedly written by devout Christians and with no intention to deceive the reader, belong to a much later time, contain much legendary material and are without historical value. Generally speaking, they are a continuation of the Gospel-literature, but the intelligent reader will at once notice the fundamental difference between our canonical Gospels

and those apocryphal writings. Our canonical Gospels deal with the historical Jesus, and they know of what they are speaking. In the apocryphal Gospels pious imagination has supplied the lack of historical knowledge.

In the Book of Acts (20:35) reference is made to a word of Jesus: "How He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." This saying of our Lord is not recorded in the Gospels. Paul, who refers to it in his charge to the elders of Ephesus, must have received it from oral tradition. It is reasonable to assume that many other sayings of Jesus, not recorded in our canonical Gospels, circulated among the first Christians. In the writings of the Church Fathers, in variant readings based upon certain manuscripts of the Greek text of the New Testament, and in several Papyrus documents discovered in recent years, similar sayings of our Lord are mentioned or referred to. But it is exceedingly difficult to say whether they are genuine or not. Most of them can be traced to genuine words of the Lord which are found in the Gospels. The few that remain do not contribute anything new to the facts that are already known to us. There is just a bare possibility, that new discoveries will bring to light some few sayings of the Lord with which we are not yet familiar. But it is absolutely safe to say that they will not change our conception of the Jesus of the New Testament.

III

In discussing the relation of the New Testament to the life and ministry of Jesus, it is well to remember that the Gospel is older than the Gospels or than any of the other New Testament writings. Jesus Himself has left no written records of His own life and work. Only

once it is reported of Him that He wrote, and on that occasion He wrote "on the ground." (John 8:8). The people referred to Him as a great prophet mighty in word and deed. His disciples addressed Him as Master or Teacher, but His teaching was not in the form of the written word. In summing up His own life work He declares, "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45). When He called the Twelve into His fellowship, He appointed them, "that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach." (Mark 3:14). He commissioned them to be Apostles, and as His Apostles He entrusted them with an important mission. But the mission for which He called and prepared them, did not include the command to write books. In the Gospel of Matthew we find many instructions which are addressed to the Twelve and which have reference to their future work, but not one of those instructions can be interpreted as a command, or even as an encouragement to them, to put down in writing the things which they had seen and heard. Furthermore, after His resurrection, when He showed himself alive to His disciples, and gave them His final instructions for the work which they were to carry on in His name, He did not intimate to them that they should write, but He commanded them to be His witnesses and to preach the Gospel to every creature, and in connection with this command He gave them the promise that they should be endued with power from on high and should receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

All our New Testament writings have therefore grown out of the preaching of the Gospel. What, then, is the Gospel, not in the later sense of the word when this term was first applied to the collection of the four written

Gospels and still later to each individual Gospel, but in the original sense in which the term is used in the New Testament itself?

There can be hardly any doubt, that the word "gospel" (in Greek *εὐαγγέλιον*.) was originally a missionary term, which denoted the message proclaimed by the Apostles. It is not certain whether Paul coined the term, or whether it was used before him. At any rate, Paul uses the term more frequently than any other New Testament writer, and he uses it always in a very definite sense. A fuller investigation of the meaning of the term is not only illuminating and instructive, but it will also lead us to the conclusion, that the Jesus of the New Testament is the Jesus of the Apostolic preaching or in other words, the Jesus of the Christian message of salvation.

The noun "*εὐαγγέλιον*" occurs in the letters of Paul more than fifty times, the corresponding verb "*εὐαγγελίζομαι*" more than twenty times. It is found in all his letters so that we may safely conclude that the term was familiar to Paul throughout his ministry. Another conclusion which can be drawn from Paul's usage of the term, is that it always refers to his own missionary preaching, his "*κήρυγμα*." Outside of Paul's letters, the term is found in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark (Matt. 4:23; 9:35; 24:14; 26:13; Mark 1:1; 1:14; 1:15; 8:35; 10:29; 13:10; 14:9; 16:15), and here it has reference to the message of Jesus. Luke makes no use of the noun "*εὐαγγέλιον*," but the verb ("*εὐαγγελίζομαι*") is found frequently, both in the Gospel and in the Book of Acts. The Gospel of John has neither the noun nor the verb of the term. In the Catholic Epistles the term is found only in First Peter, the noun in 4:17 and the verb in 1:12. The writer of the

Apocalypse once speaks of "the everlasting gospel" in 14: 6.

It has already been stated that the specific religious meaning of the term can be traced to the Apostle Paul. At any rate, this seems to be a very plausible theory since Paul is the first Christian writer who made use of the Greek world-language. The word itself means "good news," and it was well known in Hellenistic Greek, although not very widely used. However, Paul's choice of this idiomatic Greek expression was probably not determined by secular writers or the common speech of the people, but by the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible (cf. II Sam. 4: 10; Isa. 40: 9; 52: 7; 61: 1 ff.).

Of the passages in the Gospels, a few have undoubtedly the full meaning of the Pauline conception. This meaning is connected with the use of the term in Mark 13: 10 and Mark 16: 15. It is probably also attached to Mark 8: 35 and Mark 10: 29. Of special interest is the first verse of Mark's Gospel: "Beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." It is the title of the book, and since "the Gospel of Jesus Christ" was already a fixed term which had reference to the message of salvation, the author sees in the story of Jesus the very beginning of that message. In the other passages in which the Evangelists speak of the Gospel, the term applies to Jesus' message of the Kingdom. The question whether Jesus Himself might have been responsible for the use of the term, is of minor importance. What is important is the fact that the first Christians who were familiar with Paul's conception of the Gospel, applied the same term to the message of Jesus. Modern scholars have tried to prove that there is a fundamental difference between the Gospel of Jesus

and the Gospel of Paul. It is significant that the Evangelists themselves have not noticed the difference. They are firmly convinced that the Christian message of salvation and the message of Jesus Himself are essentially one.

The very word which Paul has chosen to express the nature and meaning of the Christian message to the world, suggests that the Gospel in Paul's conception is a proclamation of facts, and that these facts are the fulfillment of divine promises. This is the viewpoint taken by Paul in Rom. 1:2; 10:16; 10:28; Gal. 2:2; Eph. 3:6; 6:19, and other places. Our Lutheran fathers have therefore correctly stated that the Gospel consists in the promises of God, and that every promise of God in the Scripture is part of the Gospel. But Paul has restricted the Gospel in the narrower sense to the fulfillment of God's promises in the person and work of Christ. The Gospel is more than a promise, it is the joyful message that God has fulfilled His promises. The author of this message is God Himself (Rom. 1:1; 1:16; II Cor. 11:7; I Thess. 2:2, 8, 9), and its very heart and center is Christ, the Son of God, the crucified and risen Lord.

The central place of Christ in Paul's preaching of the Gospel is very clearly and fully stated by the Apostle himself in First Corinthians 15:1 ff. After reminding the Corinthians of the Gospel which he had preached and which they had received and accepted, he gives a summary of the Gospel in the statement, "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, and then by the Twelve." It is only another expression of the same fundamental conception of the

Gospel in its relation to the death and resurrection of Christ, when Paul speaks of the Gospel as "the story of the cross" (I Cor. 1:18), or when he tells the Corinthians, that while he was with them, he resolved to forget everything but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified (I Cor. 2:2).

Of equal importance is Paul's description of the Gospel in the opening verses of his letter to the Romans. Here it is stated that God's Gospel, for which Paul was set apart, is the message "about His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who was a descendant of David with regard to His life in the flesh, but who was publicly declared to be the Son of God in power according to the spirit of holiness, which rested upon him, by being raised from the dead." The significance of this definition lies in the emphasis placed upon the person of Christ as the center of the Gospel, especially upon those facts of His life which are essential to his redemptive work, namely His entrance into human life as the Son of David, and His resurrection by which He entered into His present life of glory.

However, Paul was not the founder of Christianity, and he was not the first preacher of the Gospel. He was not one of the Twelve who had been called by the Lord Jesus at the beginning of His ministry, and had accompanied Him on His journeys in Galilee and to Jerusalem. In fact, it may be questioned whether he had ever seen the Lord Jesus in the days of His human life and ministry. This can certainly not be proved by his statement in Second Corinthians 5:16: "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more." The whole passage (5:11-21), of which this statement is an integral part,

leads us into the very heart of Paul's personal religion. The compelling power in his personal religious life is the love of Christ. This love of Christ has manifested itself in His atoning death. Christ died for us all, and He was raised from the dead that those who live should not live unto themselves, but should have their life in Him and should consecrate themselves to His service. This realization of Christ's love has brought about a complete change in his own life. In fact, every one who is thus in union with Christ, is a new being, 'a new creation; there is a new state of things, which has taken the place of the old state of things, and in accordance with this radical change, his estimate of Christ has also undergone a change: it is no longer a knowledge "after the flesh."'

There can be no question, that Paul refers here to that fundamental religious experience in his life which we call his conversion. Nor can there be any question, that this experience has not only influenced and determined his conception of Christ, but is also the basis of his Apostolic authority. Paul at times strongly emphasized that authority. Speaking of his privileges as an Apostle, he asks the Corinthians (I Cor. 9:1): "Am I not free? Am I not an Apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?" His independence and his authority as an Apostle rest upon the fact that he has seen the Lord Jesus in His heavenly glory. Yet, Paul is firmly convinced that the heavenly Jesus, whom he saw before the gates of Damascus, is identical with the historical Jesus who suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. His experience before Damascus does not wholly belong to the sphere of his inner life. It is not a "vision" in the accepted sense of the word, but an objective reality. Paul clearly distinguishes it from his

later "visions and revelations." He places it upon the same level with the Christ-appearances after the resurrection of the Lord, when he writes to the Corinthians, after having given a full list of the witnesses of the Lord's resurrection: "Finally He was seen by me also" (I Cor. 15:8). It is only in the next verses that Paul then turns from the objective statement of fact to the subjective side of his experience by stating that it was the grace of God which manifested itself to him, and made of him what he is (verse 10).

The fullest account of his own fundamental experience, and its intimate connection with his Gospel, has been given by Paul in Gal. 1:10 ff. For the understanding of the whole passage, it is important to note its apologetic and polemical tone. Paul emphasizes the fact that his Gospel is not a human affair or a human doctrine. This he proves by calling attention to the manner in which the Gospel was received by him. He did not receive it in the ordinary way. It was not handed to him by any man, nor was he taught it. It came to him through a revelation of Jesus Christ. This again, just as in I Cor. 15:8, is an objective statement of fact. The meaning of this fact is then explained by Paul in the next verses in which he gives a brief account of his own religious development, and interprets his experience as the result of an act of God's purest grace.

Yet, while it is true that Paul's own conception of the gospel had its main source in his personal religious experience, it is also true that the Gospel which he preached was deeply rooted in the common faith of the Church that existed before him, and into which he was received. Paul was not the first Christian who had a personal relation to the glorified Jesus, and in speaking of his own personal relations to the glorified Jesus, he

only expressed what all Christian believers before him also confessed and believed. Moreover, when Paul was converted, he became a member of the church in Damascus, and the church in Damascus was closely connected with the mother church in Jerusalem. Paul had therefore ample opportunity to familiarize himself with the life and teaching of Jesus. It is true that he strongly emphasized his independence as an Apostle. But he also lays stress on the fact that his Gospel is the same as that of the original Apostles. He speaks of "*my Gospel*," but in speaking of the Gospel which he preached, he tells the Corinthians that he passed on to them what he had received (I Cor. 15:3). Three years after his conversion, he visited Jerusalem, to become acquainted with Cephas, and spent two weeks with him. Fourteen years later, he went up to Jerusalem again, and conferred with James, Cephas and John, who were regarded as the pillars of the Church. The result of that conference was that these leaders recognized the grace of God in the labors of Barnabas and Paul, pledged them their co-operation, and only asked them to remember the poor. Ever since that memorable conference, which is known as the Apostolic Council, Paul was in close contact with the mother church in Jerusalem, and gave the church his moral and financial support. It is contrary to all historical evidence, that Paul's Gospel should have differed in any essential point from the Gospel that was preached by the original Apostles. However, the question may be asked whether it can be proved beyond all reasonable doubt, that Paul's conception of the Gospel is really in complete harmony with the earlier conception of the Gospel. For a full discussion of this question, it is necessary to go back to the religious beliefs and convictions of the first Chris-

tians, and then to investigate Paul's attitude to these convictions.

IV

According to the traditional view, the history of the Apostolic Church begins with the day of Pentecost. This view is based upon Luke's account in the Book of Acts, and there is no reason why the historicity of Luke's account should be called into question. The day of Pentecost undoubtedly marks the revival of a movement which had its origin in the ministry of Jesus, but which had been interrupted by His violent death on the cross. His disciples and followers had believed in Him as the Messiah whom God had sent to establish the Kingdom of God and to redeem Israel. His shameful death destroyed their hopes. From the historical point of view, the revival of a lost cause, and much more so its rapid spread, would be totally incomprehensible without the revival of the disciples' faith in their divine Lord and Master. What had happened to revive such a faith in their hearts?

According to the unanimous testimony of all the New Testament writers, the crucified Jesus had risen from the dead on the third day, and had appeared to His disciples. He had shown Himself alive to them, and had convinced them that death had no power over Him. The earliest and most important literary record of the fundamental facts concerning the Lord's resurrection is found in First Corinthians 15: 3-8, where Paul sums up the reports of the eye-witnesses from whom he had received the facts. These reports are borne out by the Gospel records.

A comparative study of the resurrection accounts in the Gospels will disclose minor discrepancies and dif-

ferences between them. But the main facts are beyond dispute. The problem of the Lord's resurrection does not concern the facts themselves, but the interpretation of the facts. Modern scholars do not deny the belief of the disciples in the living Saviour. But they explain that belief by the vision theory, and they distinguish between a subjective and an objective vision. We cannot enter into a discussion of these theories. We simply state it as our conviction, that the term "vision" is utterly unfit to explain the historical fact of the Lord's resurrection. A vision belongs to the sphere of the inner life; it is an inner occurrence of the soul, and it has its source in a peculiar state of mind. Even the objective vision theory does not fully explain the significance of "the third day" and the empty tomb in the resurrection accounts.

The bodily resurrection of the crucified Jesus is the foundation upon which the Apostolic Church with its life, its faith, and its teaching, rests. The conviction, that the crucified Saviour had risen from the dead, and by His resurrection had entered into a new life of greater activity, separated the disciples from their Jewish co-religionists.

In the eyes of the first Christians, the resurrection of the Lord was first of all His rehabilitation and justification, and its immediate effect upon the disciples was the rekindling of their faith in Him and in His Messiahship. Thus Christianity sprang into life as worship of Jesus, the crucified and risen Saviour, the exalted and glorified Lord.

This worship of Jesus as the Lord of glory, however, carried with it from the very beginning certain religious convictions, which became the source of important doctrinal statements, especially with regard to the person

and work of Jesus. These convictions have been preserved to us in the names and titles which are connected with the person of the risen Lord in the worship of the Church. It is no exaggeration to say that the beginnings of Christian thought in general, and of the Christological dogma in particular, can be traced to the use of those names and titles in the worship of the early Church.

The oldest name and title, in which the first Christians expressed their faith in the risen Lord, is the name "*Messiah*" (Χριστός). As the Messiah-king on the throne they worshiped Him, and there is also no doubt that the earliest creed, the first formula of faith, was the simple confession, that Jesus is the Christ. But it is significant that the original meaning of the title, as applied to the Jesus of the Gospels, underwent an important change. The Messiahship of the risen Lord is no longer understood in the purely eschatological or apocalyptic sense. The eschatological meaning of the title is not lost sight of altogether: it becomes the foundation of the Christian hope in the Lord's second coming, His παρουσία (I Thess. 1:10, and elsewhere). But He is already the Messiah on the throne in His present state of exaltation, as the One to whom all power is given in heaven and on earth. His kingdom, although it will be established in full glory in the future, is in existence already, and the reign exercised by the Messiah in His present state, is a spiritual reign.

According to our four Gospels, Jesus spoke of Himself and of His mission as "*the Son of Man*." In the worship of the early Church this name is almost forgotten. But the corresponding name "*the Son of God*," which is also found in the Gospels and is applied to Jesus by those who believed Him to be the Messiah,

now rises into prominence, and receives a fuller and deeper meaning: it expresses no longer the Messianic idea, but has reference to the personal relation of Jesus to God. He is the Son of God in power because God has raised Him from the dead. Nevertheless, His resurrection is not His deification: He has always been God in the true and genuine sense, and this belief in His deity goes hand in hand with the belief in His pre-existence. In fact, it may be said that the Lord's pre-existence, which is so prominent in the Gospel of John, is already indissolubly connected with the faith of the first Christians, and the preaching of the first Christian missionaries.

Even more significant than the application of the title "the Son of God" to the person of the Lord in the faith and worship of the early Church, is the meaning connected with the name *Kύριος* (Lord) as applied to the risen and exalted Saviour by the first Christians. It expresses, as no other name or title does, the distinctive faith of all believing Christians. The name is not used in the former historical sense: it is not a mere equivalent of Master or Teacher, but has from the very beginning a much deeper religious meaning: it is the name which is above every name; it is the name upon which Christians call in every place when they offer their prayers to the God of their salvation. "There is only one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and there is only one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him" (I Cor. 8:6). He is the Lord in the absolute sense, and because He is the Lord we can not only believe in Him and put our trust in Him, but we must also worship Him and serve Him in holiness and righteousness.

But, while early Christianity is on the one hand worship of Jesus, it is on the other hand a life in the Spirit. Possession of the Spirit, whom the exalted Saviour sends down and pours out upon all believers, is the distinctive mark of His disciples. This Spirit is conceived, not as power only but also as a free gift and as a distinct person.

The firm conviction of the first Christians, that they are in possession of the Spirit of the exalted and glorified Lord, has its source in a life-experience, and the reality of this life-experience is proved by the force with which the Spirit asserts himself as the spirit of holiness in their individual lives, as well as by the force with which he binds them all together by the ties of brotherly love as members of one body—a real communion of believers, of one heart and soul. This conviction is further strengthened by the Messianic prophecies, which speak of a general outpouring of the Spirit of God at the time of the Messiah. It is confirmed by the promises of Jesus, which are now believed to have been fulfilled, and it can be traced back to the life and ministry of Jesus Himself.

Early Christianity was singularly free from any fixed ordinances in the later ecclesiastical sense. Its life was not controlled by any rules and regulations, but was guided and directed by the free movement of the Holy Spirit. The religion of the first Christians was a religion, not of the letter but of the spirit; it was not legalistic but prophetic. The believers were not bound by any law except the law of love, to which Paul refers in Galatians 6:2 as “the law of Christ.”

However, there are two things that prevented the first Christians from becoming religious enthusiasts, and these things are of fundamental importance. The

first has reference to the Lord's teaching, and the second to His life and example.

It is perhaps the highest tribute that can be paid to any man if it can be said of him that his words were regarded as an absolute authority, not only by his admirers and immediate followers, but also by subsequent generations. There is only one man to whom that tribute can be paid without any condition and restriction. It is an undeniable fact that the words of Jesus made a deep and lasting impression upon all who listened to them. This impression is summed up by the Evangelist at the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount in the words: "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at His doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." (Matt. 7:28 f.). His words indelibly impressed themselves upon the minds and hearts of His hearers, and they were accepted by His own disciples as words coming down from the living God. The Gospel of John has preserved to us Simon Peter's answer to the question of the Lord: "Will ye also go away?" His answer is: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." (John 6:68). In the Gospel of Matthew we find the Lord's own statement with regard to His prophecy of the end: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." (Matt. 24:35). After His resurrection, the disciples not only remembered His words but also valued them as the most precious and priceless heritage which the Master had left them. His words were their light and comfort, their rod and staff on their own journey. His words were also the only safe guide for the believers in whose hearts the Spirit had wrought a new life of holiness and love: they pointed out to the

believer the true way of life; they told him how to live and conduct himself if he wanted to please God. For this purpose the sayings of the Lord were carefully preserved, and collections of His sayings became the basis of Christian conduct. They were intended for the believer in his relation to God and to his fellow-believer. But they prepared the way for a new order of things, and laid the foundation of new ethical and moral standards in the world. By the believer they were accepted as the very words of God, because they were known to have been spoken by Him who was worshiped as the Lord of glory. But their intrinsic truth has secured for them a place in the heart of mankind from which no earthly power will ever dislodge them.

But the Master's words could not be separated from His own life and example. His words have given to the world new ideals. But these ideals were exemplified in His own life. Here was a life, perfect in holiness, in obedience to the will of God, and perfect in self-sacrificing love. It reached its climax in His death on the cross when He gave His life "a ransom for many." But was not every moment of His life spent in the same ministry of love which led Him step by step to the cross of Calvary? His disciples who followed Him, who were witnesses of His words and deeds, learned to know Him and to love Him. But it was after His resurrection, that the real meaning of His life was revealed to them. To follow His example, to walk in His footsteps, to love as He had loved, and to forgive as He had forgiven, to serve each other as He had served them when He girded Himself, and began to wash their feet,—this was their ideal of life, and, however, imperfectly this ideal was realized in their own lives, they never tried to drag it down to their own level.

A thorough examination of the Pauline Epistles will show that Paul did not depart from the teachings of the mother Church on a single point. There is no difference between Paul and the early Church in the conception of Christ as the Son of God. Paul's own Christology is a development of the universal faith of all Christians who "call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in every place." (I Cor. 1:3). It is true that Paul has developed a doctrine of redemption and atonement, which seems to have been entirely his own. Yet in First Corinthians 15:3 we are told that he passed on to the Corinthians, as of first importance, the account which he had received, "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." The same is true of the Lord's resurrection, and its bearing on our faith. Finally, together with all Christians, and in accordance with the promises of Jesus Himself, Paul also shared in the fervent hope of the Lord's second coming. The idea of the Kingdom of God has not a central place in Paul's letters, but Paul is familiar with the idea, and his conception of it agrees with the conception of the early Church; he associates the Kingdom of God primarily with the Lord's second coming (I Thess. 2:12; Gal. 5:21; I Cor. 6:9; I Cor. 15:50), but he occasionally refers to it as a thing of the present, and in doing so emphasizes its spiritual nature. (I Cor. 4:20; Rom. 14:17; Col. 1:13; Col. 4:11).

However, the most important question in the discussion of Paul's relation to the teachings of the early Church, concerns his relation to the historical Jesus, His teaching as well as His life and example. Many of our modern scholars take the ground that Paul had no real interest in the life and teaching of the Master, that the human life of the Lord was to him a mere incident

and episode. Even some of our conservative scholars are inclined to take similar views. The writer has been convinced for a long time that this is an erroneous position, which is not warranted by the facts in the case. It is quite true that Paul's references to the historical Jesus are comparatively few in number, and that these few are more or less of an incidental character. But it must not be forgotten, that Paul's letters are occasional writings, which deal to a great extent with practical conditions and difficulties arising out of his missionary labors. The *argumentum e silentio* is always a very weak argument, and it may lead to very wrong conclusions. To argue, that because Paul is silent in his letters on many important phases of the Lord's ministry, therefore he must not have known them, or must have been indifferent to them, is an untenable position.

Furthermore, while it is also quite true that Paul's interest is chiefly centered in the Lord's death and resurrection, these two fundamental facts presuppose the story of the Cross, and the story of the Cross can never be separated from the story of the Lord's life and ministry. This does not mean that Paul has known a written "Gospel," although it is quite possible that some written sources such as Luke refers to in the preface to his Gospel, were known to him. But it means that he was familiar with the Gospel tradition, and made use of it in his missionary preaching. This is conclusively proved by his full and accurate account of the institution of the Lord's Supper in First Corinthians 11: 23 ff. The manner in which Paul introduces his account, forbids us to think of a special revelation: he has passed on to the Corinthians what he himself has received, and he is convinced that what he has received is "from the Lord." The verbs which Paul uses here,

have a technical meaning: they have reference to the oral tradition, while the preposition *ἀπό* (from) refers to the ultimate source, and does not exclude but rather includes human agencies. It is safe to say that the institution of the Lord's Supper is not the only historical fact of the Lord's life, which Paul received from the original Apostles.

As a matter of fact, the historical material regarding the Lord's earthly life and ministry in Paul's letters is much more abundant than some scholars are willing to admit. The Davidic descent of the Lord is referred to by Paul in Romans 1:3; 15:12; II Tim. 2:8. The name "Son of David" is in the Gospels a title of the Messiah. But no one could have claimed to be the Messiah unless he was known to be a descendant of David. Paul must therefore have been familiar with the Lord's genealogy. As the "Son of David" all the promises of God, which were given to the people of Israel, have been fulfilled in Him. (II Cor. 1:20; Rom. 9:5). He was born of a woman, and made subject to the law (Gal. 4:4); He became a minister of the circumcision to establish the truthfulness of God (Rom. 15:8), and though He was rich, He became poor for our sake (II Cor. 8:9). The story of the Saviour's birth, and the circumstances attending His birth, are told by Luke in the first two chapters of his Gospel. In view of the references in the Pauline Epistles, which we have just mentioned, it is hard to believe that Paul should not have been familiar with the same story.

That Paul had an intimate knowledge of the story of the Cross, has been stated already. The Cross of Christ is referred to by him in about fifteen places. It is intimately connected with his conception of the Gospel, and its meaning is summed up in the rule of faith, which

is the nucleus of the Apostles' Creed, and is stated by him in I. Cor. 15:3 in the words: "That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, and that He was raised from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures." The same rule of faith is referred to in I Tim. 6:12f where Timothy is admonished to remember the "beautiful profession of faith," which he made before many witnesses, and which is based upon Christ's great profession before Pontius Pilate.

It may be readily conceded that Paul's lack of personal knowledge of the Lord's ministry has been of disadvantage to him in presenting to his hearers a vivid picture of the historical Jesus. However, the statement sometimes made by modern scholars, that the Saviour's life and example had no influence upon Paul's life or his own ideal of life, is not in accordance with the facts. In I Thess. 1:5f, Paul reminds his readers "of the kind of life we lived among you for your sake;" then he goes on saying: "And you followed the example set by us and *by the Lord*." The Philippians are exhorted to have that same humble attitude of mind, in their relation to each other, which Christ Jesus had (Phil. 2:4ff). Of special importance is Paul's discussion of the attitude of the strong to the weak in Rom. 15:1 ff. In this whole passage, the Lord's life and example is clearly made the basis of the appeal to the strong, "to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not just suit themselves; every one must try to please his neighbor, to do him good, and help him, just as Christ also did not live for Himself." Therefore the Apostle prays that God may grant them to follow the example of Jesus Christ, and live in harmony with one another (v. 5). All these references, however, in which the Apostle has in mind

the example of our Lord, are surpassed by the Apostle's frequent recourse to the self-sacrificing love of Christ; which culminated in the giving of His own life. The Galatians are reminded that the Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins to save us from the present wicked world (Gal. 1:4). The Apostle's own life in Christ is a life "by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). It is the consciousness of Christ's love that urges and drives him in his own ministry of reconciliation (II. Cor. 5:14). The Ephesians are admonished by him to walk in love, just as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us, as a sweet-smelling offering and sacrifice to God (Eph. 5:1f).

Just as the Lord's life is Paul's ideal of a Christian life, so the Lord's teaching in his supreme authority. In several places of his letters Paul has referred his readers to "a word of the Lord." These references are so instructive and important that we will briefly discuss them. Two of them are found in First Thessalonians; two others have their place in First Corinthians.

The members of the church in Thessalonica grieved for those in their midst who had recently fallen asleep. The Apostle assures them, "on the authority of a word of the Lord," that those who survive until the coming of the Lord, will have no advantage over those who have fallen asleep. He then describes the manner of the Lord's coming in words that are similar to the words of Jesus which are recorded in the Gospels. If the reader will compare I. Thess. 4:13-18 with Mark 13:26f and Matt. 24:31, he will come to the conclusion that Paul and the Synoptics have drawn from the same source.

In the passage that follows, the Apostle again refers to a word of the Lord as his authority for the statement

that the day of the Lord will come "like a thief in the night" (I Thess. 5:1ff). This word of the Lord is not only found in the Gospels (Matt. 24:43; Luke 12:39), but is also quoted in Second Peter (3:10) and in the Apocalypse (3:3; 16:15). In First Thessalonians, Paul introduces it by the significant statement that the Thessalonians have already an accurate knowledge of these things, and therefore do not need to have anyone write to them.

The seventh chapter of First Corinthians deals with the problems of marriage and married life. After giving his advice to those who are unmarried or widows, the Apostle continues: "To those already married my instructions are—indeed, they are not mine, but the Lord's—that a wife must not separate from her husband; if she has separated, she must remain single or else become reconciled to him; and a husband must not divorce his wife" (I Cor. 7:10f). Here the Apostle clearly distinguishes between his own authority and the authority of the Lord Jesus; he calls the attention of the Corinthians to a word of the Lord, upon which he bases his own instructions to them. The Lord's saying which he quotes is recorded in our three Synoptic Gospels (Matt. 5:32; Mark 10:11f; Luke 16:18).

In the ninth chapter of First Corinthians, the Apostle discusses his own ministry as an example of self-denying love. As a minister of the Gospel he did not accept any remuneration for his work among them, but supported himself by working with his own hands. However, this should not be the rule, but is an exception. The rule is that those who preach the Gospel, should also get their living from it. To prove this, the Apostle uses a threefold argument. He first appeals to the law of nature, then to the ordinances of God in the Old

Testament, and finally to the authority of the Lord Jesus Himself. He doubtless has in mind the Lord's saying recorded in the Gospels (Matt. 10:10; Luke 10:7), that a laborer is worthy of his hire.

These references show that to Paul as well as to the original Apostles the teaching of Jesus was the supreme authority.

However, the Apostle has made a much more extensive use of the teaching of Jesus than those few direct references to words of the Lord indicate.

It is a well-known fact that, as a rule, Paul closes his letters with practical exhortations which pertain to the Christian life and conduct of his readers. A comparative study of these exhortations leads to the conclusion that they were written on the basis of a uniform plan, and that this plan goes back to very definite instructions with which the readers were already familiar. The most explicit set of such exhortations is found in the Epistle to the Romans (chapters 12 and 13). But their general plan and outline, as well as their connection with former instructions received by the readers, are perhaps most conspicuous in Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians. Paul had practically finished his letter with the third chapter. What follows seems to be what we might call an afterthought. Yet the contents of this unusually long postscript have an important bearing on the development of the Christian life of the Thessalonian church, and are of extraordinary interest to us. The exhortations in these last two chapters are introduced by a statement in which the Apostle reminds his readers of former instructions, which they had received from him, about "the way you are to live so as to please God" (I Thess. 4:1f). The phrase itself is so carefully worded that it may have been the

title of a written statement, which contained a summary of Christian life and conduct—not a *regula fidei*, but a *regula vitae*. This impression is confirmed by the order in which those instructions are taken up: (a) sanctification; (b) brotherly love. There is no doubt that in a rule of life, especially intended for recent converts from heathenism, the subject of sanctification would receive the first place. The manner in which the transition is then made from the first to the second subject, can be fully explained only by the fact that in the rule of life, to which Paul refers, the subject of brotherly love also had the same place. The Apostle writes: “But concerning brotherly love, there is no need to write to you” (4:9). He would probably have omitted the subject altogether if it had not been mentioned in the rule of life, with which the Thessalonians were already familiar. Highly significant is also his statement that he has given those former instructions to them “on the authority of the Lord Jesus (4:2). The whole passage suggests to us a rule of life, which was based upon the teaching of Jesus.

Further investigation shows that this rule of life must have been identical with what the Apostle meant by the word διδαχή in Romans 6:17 and 16:17. Διδαχή means teaching or doctrine. But the word is not used by Paul with regard to his missionary preaching, his κηρυγμα, which is designated by the term εὐαγγελιον and its synonymous expressions. In both places where Paul uses the word διδαχή, it has reference to a teaching which concerns the Christian life.

In Romans 16:17 the readers are admonished “to guard against those who are causing divisions and difficulties, contrary to the teaching which you have learned, and to avoid them.” These disturbers of the

peace are then described as persons who "are not serving the Lord Christ, but their own evil desires and with their persuasive and flattering talk deceive the simple-minded (v. 18). The teaching or doctrine (διδάχη), which the readers once learned, points to a very definite form of instruction concerning the true way of life.

Still more important is the use of the word διδάχη in Romans 6:17. The Revised Version has rendered verse 17 as follows: "Thanks be to God that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered." What is meant by the "form of teaching," to which the Christians were once handed over? The answer to this question hangs on the meaning of the phrase τύπος διδασχῆς. The translation "form of doctrine" (A. V.) or "form of teaching" (R. V.) agrees with the translation of the *Vulgate*: *Forma doctrinae*. A marginal note in the Revised Version suggests the translation "pattern of teaching," which would be more in harmony with Luther's translation *Vorbild der Lehre*. Commentators are divided in their opinions with regard to the proper meaning of the phrase. The Greek word τύπος originally denotes the mark left by a blow, or the stamp struck by a die. From this the word gets the meaning *figure, image, model, example* or *type* prefiguring something. Paul uses the word more than half a dozen times in his letters. Thus the Thessalonians are complimented by the Apostle because they have become a pattern for all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia (I Thess. 1:7). The Philippians are urged by him to follow his example (Phil. 3:17). Timothy is admonished to set an example of good works to the believers (I Tim. 4:12). It is on the same line when the Apostle speaks of a τύπος διδασχῆς, a model teaching,

to which the Roman Christians were delivered, and by which they were to be guided in their daily life and conduct. The nature of this model teaching is revealed by the context: it is not a "rule of faith," as Moffatt suggests by his translation of the phrase, but a "rule of life," to which the Christians wholeheartedly obligated themselves when they were baptized. The entire sixth chapter of Romans is an earnest appeal to the Christians to lead a consecrated life, and this appeal is based on the experience through which the Christians had passed in and with their baptism into the death of Christ. The rule of faith was connected with the missionary preaching of the Apostles. The rule of life had its source in the teaching of Jesus Himself.

V

Our discussion of Paul's relation to the faith and life of the first Christians has shown that there was complete agreement between them. The Gospel which Paul preached had its roots in the story of the Cross. The way of life, which he taught, was founded on the teaching of the Master. It is a most remarkable fact that modern investigation with regard to the sources underlying our Gospels, has come to the same results. Our four Gospels contain the records of Jesus. The first three are called the Synoptic Gospels because they were written according to a general uniform plan of which the broad lines can still be clearly traced if the Gospel of Mark is taken as a basis. The Gospel of Mark is almost entirely contained in the Gospel of Matthew, and a large part of it has been taken over into the Gospel of Luke. The literary relationship of the first three Gospels is still a problem, which may never be com-

pletely solved. Yet it is safe to say that the material which is common to all three Gospels constituted the bulk of the missionary preaching in the early Church. The order in which this material was presented is indicated by the following important events in the Lord's life and ministry, which may be regarded as our guiding posts: The ministry of John the Baptist; the beginnings of Jesus in Capernaum; the selection of the Twelve; the confession of Peter at Cæsarea Philippi; the last journey to Jerusalem; the last days in Jerusalem; the story of the Cross; the resurrection of the Lord. The author of the fourth Gospel has followed a different plan. Yet traces of his familiarity with the Synoptic plan can still be observed in his Gospel.

A second source which has been discovered in our first three Gospels, is more elusive, and it is perhaps impossible to restore it, as Harnack has attempted to do. But of its existence there is no doubt, nor can it be doubted that it was chiefly, though not exclusively, composed of discourses and sayings of the Lord. It is particularly conspicuous in the Gospel of Matthew, and it is the writer's conviction that the former publican Levi-Matthew is responsible for it.

In addition to these two sources, which we have just mentioned, our Evangelists may have used other sources which were accessible to them. Luke, in the preface to his Gospel, speaks of many who had undertaken to write down accounts of the facts upon which the Gospel message was based. Indeed, we would be surprised if it had been otherwise. Our Gospels were not written until after the year 60. There is therefore a period of about thirty years between Jesus and our Gospels. But the sources underlying our Gospels, lessen the time, not covered by any written documents, to a considerable

degree. In fact, there is no reason why important sayings of the Lord should not have been written down soon after His resurrection.

Our Gospels are so intimately bound up with the faith and life, the teaching and preaching, of the early Church that their general trustworthiness is fully assured. All four were written by men who believed in Jesus, and wished to influence their readers in the interest of the Christian faith. But each Gospel has also its own specific purpose which is expressed either in a title (Matt. 1:1; Mark 1:1), or in a preface (Luke 1:1-4), or in an introductory meditation (John 1:1-18). And each has its own peculiarities which are due to the individuality of the author.

Since none of our Gospels has given us the name of its author, the question of authorship must be determined by external and internal evidence. The external evidence is contained in the testimony of the early Church, which can be traced to the close of the first century. It is in each case supported by strong internal evidence. It may help us in our study of the Jesus of the New Testament, to point out a few characteristic features by which each individual Gospel is distinguished. If we follow the chronological order we have to begin with the Gospel of Mark.

The Gospel of Mark.—When Luke wrote his Gospel, he justified his own undertaking by stating that others had made similar attempts. At the same time, he volunteered the information that their accounts had been received from the original eye-witnesses. Although Luke does not mention the name of Mark, the Gospel of Mark must have been among those written accounts to which he refers.

The name of Mark is mentioned in the New Testament in the following places: Acts 12:12ff; 13:5, 13; 15:38-41; Col. 4:10; Philemon 23; II Tim. 4:11; I Peter 5:13. According to these references, he was a nephew of Barnabas, and the spiritual son of Peter. His mother's name was Mary, and her house in Jerusalem was one of the places where the Apostles and many of the "brethren" used to meet in the early days of the Christian Church. Through his relative Barnabas he became acquainted with Paul, and accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first extensive missionary tour from Antioch to Cyprus and Pamphylia, but for reasons unknown to us left them, and returned to Jerusalem. He became the assistant of Barnabas, but about ten years later we find him again in the company of Paul as one of the Apostle's faithful attendants during his imprisonment at Rome.

The reference to Mark in the Book of Acts and the Epistles of Paul leave the impression that he was a trusted and faithful servant rather than a born leader. This impression is confirmed by the general character of his Gospel. There is an ancient and apparently well founded tradition that Mark wrote his Gospel on the basis of missionary discourses which had been delivered by Peter before the gates of Rome. The Gospel of Mark bears all the earmarks of such a missionary Gospel in which the earliest Gospel tradition—the story of Jesus as it was told by the first Christian missionaries to those who never heard of the Saviour—has been preserved to us. The purpose of the Gospel is expressed in the first verse of the first chapter: "Beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." The Gospel itself culminates in the story of the Cross, but this story is preceded by sketches from the Lord's ministry, in

which the Lord is pictured to us as the great prophet, mighty in word and deed. The person of Peter occupies a prominent place in the Gospel, and Petrine traces are found throughout the book. We call this Gospel the Gospel of Mark. We might just as well call it the Gospel of Peter.

The Gospel of Matthew.—The Gospel of Mark is almost entirely contained in the Gospel of Matthew. But the chief characteristic feature of Matthew's Gospel may be found in five large groups of the Lord's sayings, which the writer has woven into the narrative part of his book. These sayings of our Lord have been arranged in topical order, with the Kingdom of heaven as the central theme. The first group contains the Sermon on the Mount, and deals with the righteousness of the Kingdom (5-7). Missionary instructions to the Twelve, which form the second group (ch. 10), have their central thought in the expansion of the Kingdom. A cycle of seven parables in chapter 13 sets forth the mystery and nature of the Kingdom. The life in the Kingdom is the dominant note in chapter 18, which speaks of the duties of discipleship. Chapter 24 and 25, which contain the eschatological sayings of the Lord, look forward to the consummation of the Kingdom.

Intimately connected with the idea of the Kingdom of heaven, is the idea of the Messiah. According to the title, the author intends to present to his readers a "history of Jesus the Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." The first two chapters give an account of the Messiah's nativity. Then follows an introductory section which sets forth the Messiah's preparation for His work (3:1—4:11). The Messiah's work is described in the next section (4:12-11:1), and the growing opposition to Him is the dominant note in the section that

follows (11: 2—16: 20). The first Passion announcement prepares the reader for the last journey to Jerusalem and the last days in the city (16: 21—25: 46). The story of the Messiah's suffering, death and resurrection is told in the last three chapters.

In the narrative part of his Gospel, the writer follows the plan of Mark. But the historical material is subordinated to didactic purposes. The Christ-picture of the Gospel is most impressive and of magnificent grandeur. The history of the Messiah is presented in the light of the Old Testament prophecies. But the idea of the Messiah as the king of glory melts into one with the idea of the servant of the Lord as the prophet Isaiah has described him.

Tradition has attributed this Gospel to the former publican Levi-Matthew of Capernaum, who is mentioned in the lists of the Apostles as one of the Twelve. Modern scholars accept this testimony of the early Church insofar as the Lord's sayings in this Gospel are concerned. But there is no reason why Matthew's authorship should not be extended to the entire book.

The Gospel of Luke.—Some one has made the remark that Luke's Gospel is the most attractive book in the Bible. Such a statement is not without foundation. The writer of this Gospel was a native of Antioch in Syria. In his younger days he had studied medicine, and the practice of his profession must have helped him to develop that genuine human sympathy which is one of the characteristic features of his Gospel. His acquaintance with Paul, who refers to him as "the beloved physician" (Col. 4: 14), soon ripened into friendship and admiration, and it was undoubtedly Paul's life and example that inspired him to write his great historical work on the origin and expansion of Christianity, of

which his Gospel is the first part. The whole character of the book is in complete harmony with Paul's conception of the Gospel as the message of salvation for Jew and Gentile. This is already seen in the historical setting of the Gospel, but we can also observe it in the general treatment of the Lord's life and ministry, and more particularly in the idea of universality, which permeates the Gospel. Thus, for instance, the genealogy of the Lord is traced back to Adam, the first man, in order to emphasize the fact that Jesus is the second Adam, and as such belongs to all men.

Luke's picture of Jesus Himself is in accordance with the universal tendency of his Gospel. Jesus is presented to us as the Saviour of the whole world, the revealer of God's boundless love and mercy, especially to those who are lost. He is the friend of publicans and sinners. He ministers not only to Jews, but also to Samaritans. With manifest satisfaction Luke tells us how those despised persons were drawn to the Lord, and were received by Him. And when he wrote down those beautiful parables which we find in the 15th chapter of his Gospel, there must have been in his own heart the same joy which Jesus expressed in the words: "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." It is Luke who calls our attention to the Lord's heart-winning kindness, His human sympathy, his love of home and friendship, His care for the weak and needy. Zacchæus the publican, Martha and Mary of Bethany, the widow of Nain, the sinful woman—these and other familiar stories are peculiar to Luke's Gospel. It is Luke who has transmitted to us the words of Jesus, which were addressed to the disciples, and which we may apply to the readers of this Gospel: "Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see."

The Gospel of John.—Origen, a Church father who lived in the first half of the third century, has characterized this book as the “spiritual” Gospel. Luther, who was particularly fond of John’s Gospel, spoke of it as “the true and tender chief-Gospel.” There is no doubt that many Christians, in reading this Gospel, will get the same impression today. What attracts them first, and most of all, is the wonderful picture of Jesus, which we find here. To many modern critics it is the picture of an idealized Jesus, whose resemblance to the historical Jesus of the first three Gospels is only very remote. But to the writer himself that picture was very real: it bears the marks of the same Jesus whom he saw and knew. This is already brought out in the words of the prolog: “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” (1:14). Far from being speculation or speculative mysticism, this statement is the confession of an eye-witness, who speaks of his own experience, and the experience of his fellow-disciples. Traces of an eye-witness occur also in other places of the Gospel. The winning of the first disciples is the story of a man who must have been one of those first disciples. The description of the crucifixion scene betrays the intimate knowledge of a man who was present at that scene.

The Gospel begins with a prolog (1:1-18), which is followed by an historical introduction giving the testimony of the Baptist, and the winning of the first disciples (1:1-51). The first large section of the Gospel (2:1—4:54) deals with an early ministry of the Lord in Judea, which is not recorded in the Synoptic Gospels. It is introduced by the Lord’s first sign, and closes with His second sign. The next large section (5:1—11:54)

describes the Lord as the Light and the Life of the world. The events of the last week, the evening of the betrayal with the farewell discourse and the high priestly prayer, form the contents of chapters twelve to seventeen. The glorification of the Lord, through His death and resurrection, is the theme of the last section in the three chapters that follow. The concluding chapter (21) contains what may be termed an epilog to the Gospel.

The Gospel of John is not a biography of Jesus in the ordinary sense. It does not give us a full account of the Lord's ministry, but groups the most important events of His ministry around His journeys to Jerusalem. Yet the Gospel of John is much more than a mere chronicle of certain events in the Lord's life: it is the first authentic interpretation of the meaning of His life and person by one who had the closest personal relations with Him.

Traces of this personal relationship are frequent in our Gospel. The writer has never forgotten the day when he first met the Lord Jesus, and heard His kind invitation: "Come, and ye shall see." On that day, the son of Zebedee became the seer, the man of visions. A new light dawned upon him, and a new life began for him. To be sure, the world did not apprehend the light. But the light still shines in the darkness, and all who believe on His name, shall see the light as John saw it, and shall find in Him eternal life. To bring men to such an experience is the ultimate aim of John's Gospel.

VI

The Jesus of our Gospels is the Christ of our faith. But can we say with the same degree of assurance that

He is also the Jesus of history? Our investigation has shown that the Gospel records are inseparably connected with the Gospel itself. But it is impossible to divorce the preaching of the Gospel from those historical facts which constitute the revelation of God in our Lord Jesus Christ. However, not every detail of the Lord's life is of the same importance, and not all the historical facts, recorded in our Gospels, bear the same relation to the Gospel. The Jesus of our Gospels, the Jesus of the New Testament, is primarily the Christ who died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and was raised from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures. This explains the fact that the story of the Cross has received such an important place in our Gospels.

But the story of the Cross would not be intelligible without a general knowledge of the Lord's life and ministry. His death terminated His ministry, but also completed it. In fact, both may be regarded as the fulfillment of a divine mission for which the Son of God was sent into the world. It is because of this intimate connection that all four accounts of the Lord's ministry lead us to the foot of the cross.

The beginning of the Lord's public ministry is marked by the call which came to Him when He was baptized by John. And it is probable that the story of Jesus, as it was told by the first Christian missionaries, did not go beyond that important event. But while the call to His public ministry came to Jesus in the course of His human life, the divine mission for which He was called is so intimately connected with His own person that, in a wider sense, the beginning of His life is also the beginning of His ministry. For this reason the nativity stories in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke help us to

understand not only the mystery of His person but also the meaning and purpose of His mission.

A brief discussion of the Lord's ministry, including the circumstances connected with His birth, will bring this study to its fitting conclusion.

In the Gospel of Mark, which embodies the missionary preaching of the Apostles, no reference is made to the Saviour's birth and the circumstances connected with His birth. We may therefore assume that the Apostolic preaching began not with the story of the Saviour's birth, but with His first public appearance and the ministry of His forerunner. Moreover, the two accounts of the Lord's Nativity in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke (Matt. 1-2; Luke 1-2, and 3: 23-38) have no apparent connection with each other, and therefore do not go back to a common source. The first two chapters of Luke's Gospel have a strong Aramaic coloring, and Luke himself has intimated to his readers the ultimate source of these chapters when he writes that Mary, the mother of Jesus, "kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart" (2: 19 and 2: 51). Matthew's Nativity section, in which Joseph is the central figure, points to a tradition which had its origin in the mother Church of Jerusalem, and it is not unlikely that James, "the brother of the Lord," is the authority back of that tradition.

It may be difficult to harmonize the two accounts of the Lord's Nativity. But it is all the more significant that they agree, not only in the Lord's Davidic descent, but also in His birth from the virgin Mary.

The Lord's Davidic descent is beyond dispute. It is referred to in many places of the New Testament outside of the Gospels (Rom. 1: 3; 15: 12; II Tim. 2: 8; Acts 2: 30; 13: 23; Hebr. 7: 14; Rev. 3: 7; 5: 5; 22: 16),

and it is underlying the Lord's own Messianic claims. The Messianic hope of the Jewish people culminated in the belief that the Messianic king of the future would proceed from the house of David. This belief was based on the divine promise which had been given by the prophet to King David: "Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever" (II. Sam. 7:16), a promise that became the source of the Messianic prophecies in Psalm 2 and Psalm 110. Therefore the Messiah is called "the Son of David," and this title was also applied to Jesus by those who believed in Him as the Messiah (Matt. 9:17; 15:22; 20:30; 21:9). Jesus Himself did not object to the title, nor did He ever correct the belief in His Davidic descent which is presupposed by that title. Moreover, His enemies never questioned His Davidic descent, although they rejected His Messianic claims. The two genealogies of the Lord (Matt. 1:2-17 and Luke 3:23-38) are the genealogies of Joseph, the husband of Mary; they do not agree in many particulars, nor have they been inserted in the Gospel records for the purpose of demonstrating the Lord's Davidic descent, but they confirm what was generally known and accepted as the truth, that the family of Jesus traced its lineage back to the house of David.

The Lord's Davidic descent sheds no light on the question of the Virgin Birth. For, whether Joseph was, or was not, the natural father of Jesus, the child that was born to Joseph and Mary, was in every respect a member of the house of David.

But the Nativity sections of Matthew and Luke, which speak of the Lord's Davidic descent, also state that He "was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary" (Matt. 1:16; 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38). These statements make it necessary to discuss the question of

the Virgin Birth, which has such a prominent place in the religious and theological controversies of the present day.

At the very outset, it should be understood that the question of the Virgin Birth must be decided on exegetical and historical grounds.

A discussion of the question has to take into consideration two points: (a) the facts stated by the evangelists; (b) the explanation of the facts.

With regard to the first point, it is desirable to investigate the accounts of Matthew and Luke separately.

Matthew mentions the Virgin Birth for the first time in 1:16: "Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, who was the mother of Jesus called Christ." It is true that the genuineness of this reading has been questioned. But the reading itself is so well attested, and the evidence in favor of its genuineness so overwhelming, that it cannot be rejected on textual grounds. Besides, verse 16 is intimately connected with the following passage 1:18-25, which is introduced by the significant statement: "Now these were the circumstances of the birth of Jesus Christ" (v. 18). In the story that follows, the apologetic tendency is evident. Matthew wishes to defend the circumstances of the Saviour's birth against slanderous reports spread by the Jews. This leads us to the conclusion that at the time when Matthew wrote his Gospel, Christians already believed in the Virgin Birth, because a knowledge of this belief is underlying the slanderous reports against which Matthew's account is directed. The true facts of the Saviour's birth are given by Matthew in the words of the angel addressed to Joseph: "That which is begotten in her comes from the Holy Spirit" (v. 20).

Luke's account of the Virgin Birth is entirely based upon the story of Mary (Luke 1:26-38). The Virgin Birth is expressly referred to in verse 35: "The Holy Spirit will come over thee, and the power of the Most High will overshadow thee; for that reason the child will be called holy: the Son of God." This is more explicit than Matthew's statement, for here the Lord's Sonship is based upon His supernatural birth.

The two accounts of the Virgin Birth in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke supplement each other. But how did they originate? Can we accept them as historical, or must we reject them as legendary and mythical? We do not intend to enter into a dogmatic discussion of the subject, but shall confine ourselves to the historical side of the question.

The general trustworthiness of our Gospels is admitted on all sides. Whatever modern critics may think of those who wrote the Gospels, they cannot deny the fact that our Evangelists wanted to tell the truth; nor can they deny the fact that our Evangelists were in a position to know the truth. Luke himself tells us that he "investigated it all carefully from the beginning" (Luke 1:3). He was therefore firmly convinced that his account of the Lord's birth was in accordance with the facts. It is possible, of course, that he was mistaken. But if Luke's story of the Virgin Birth is rejected as legendary, the question arises: Where did his story originate? Certainly not on Jewish soil because there are no foundations for it in Judaism. And yet Luke's account points to a Jewish source. And the same is true of Matthew's account. It is true that according to Matthew the birth of the Saviour was the fulfilment of the prophecy in Isaiah 7:14: "The maiden will conceive and bear a son, and they will name him

Immanuel'' (Matt. 1:23). But according to Jewish belief the Messiah was not to be born of a virgin, and consequently Isa. 7:14 was not understood in the Messianic sense, so that it cannot be argued that the belief in the Virgin Birth is the outgrowth of an Old Testament prophecy. The legendary origin of the story of the Virgin Birth therefore breaks down from whatever point of view we may look at it.

On the other hand, the doctrine of the Virgin Birth is in complete harmony with the New Testament conception of the Lord's person. His whole being is permeated by the Holy Spirit. He is one with God, and therefore without sin. He is anointed with the Holy Spirit when He is baptized, and He performs the work to which He is called, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Is it not reasonable, therefore, to assume that the Holy Spirit, who was with Him and upon Him, was also the creative principle of His human life?

The Synoptic accounts of the Lord's public ministry agree in the statement that His own ministry was closely related to the mission and ministry of John the Baptist. In fact, the relation between the two is described by the Synoptists in such a way that John is characterized by them as the Lord's forerunner who was sent to prepare the way for Him. This interpretation of the relation of Jesus and John rests upon the fact that Jesus presented Himself among those who were baptized by John, and that His baptism by John was His first public appearance which marked the beginning of His own ministry. It is therefore necessary to say a few words on the mission and ministry of John the Baptist.

John began his career as a religious reformer. He reminds us of one of the great prophets in Israel like

Amos and Isaiah. His striking personality, his ascetic life, and the peculiar character of his message, made a deep impression upon all classes of the people. His short career was abruptly ended, but his work was continued by his disciples.

The message of John had two distinct features: in the first place, he preached righteousness and judgment; in the second place, he proclaimed the coming of the Kingdom of heaven. Both sides of his message found their symbolic expression in the rite of Baptism which he introduced as a sign of repentance and faith. But the real significance of his message lay in the fact that he expected the glorious coming of the Kingdom in the immediate future. The mission of the Baptist may be summed up in the three words: Prophet, herald, witness.

It is a most significant fact that the first step in the ministry of our Lord was an act of obedience to an ordinance of God, which was instituted for sinners. The Lord's own sinlessness was never questioned. Yet Jesus identified Himself with the mission and work of His forerunner, and the motive of His request, to be baptized by John, was the desire "to fulfill all righteousness." Thus Jesus begins His own ministry as the sin-bearer of His people in the sense of Isaiah's Servant of the Lord. At the same time He is made certain of His calling by the voice from heaven: "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mark 1:11).

As the Lord's Baptism is the divine call to His Messianic work, so the Temptation in the wilderness is His first test. The voice from heaven is usually explained on the basis of Psalm 2:7, but it is also closely connected with Isaiah 42:1: "Behold, my Servant, whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon Him." When the Spirit leads Him

into the wilderness, the Lord knows that He has been chosen to fulfill all righteousness. He has been assured of His Sonship. He has also been assured of His Messiahship. But the question is: How shall the Messiah do His work? Two different roads are before Him. The first is indicated by the attacks of Satan: it is the way of the world, and it leads to glory and power; but it is not God's will and way. This way the Lord rejects, and instead of it He determines to follow the road that is pointed out to Him in the Word of God. Fully conscious of the consequences to which His decision may lead Him, He resolves to put His trust in God, and becomes obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Baptism and Temptation mark the beginning of the Lord's public ministry. They also determine the nature of His ministry, as well as its ultimate aim and purpose. His ministry is a service which culminates in the giving of His own life: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). Nor can there be any doubt as to the ultimate aim and purpose of such a service: "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:11). Thus the Messiah is primarily the Saviour, and as the Saviour He serves His people, both by word and deed. His ministry may therefore be divided into a ministry of the word and a ministry of mercy. Both are of equal importance for His Messianic work, as one interprets the other, and in both the Messiah gave Himself. (Matt. 4:23-25; Matt. 11:2-5; Luke 4:17-21; Mark 1:39; Acts 1:1; Acts 10:38).

The Lord's ministry of mercy has its direct source in His deep human sympathy with the sufferings and afflictions of His fellow men. (Mark 6:34; 8:2; Matt.

9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 18:27; 20:34; Luke 7:13). This sympathy creates in the hearts of those to whom it goes out, a desire to be helped by Him. It is often accompanied by the word. But it is inherent in Him; it emanates from His heart, and it finds a response in the heart of the person who is in need of His help. It is the means by which a real living contact is established between Himself and the object of His sympathy. It instills confidence, and although that confidence may not be faith in the full sense, it is the beginning of faith, or to say the least, it is the fertile soil in which true, genuine faith may be planted and may grow. But the Lord's sympathy is not an empty sympathy; for wherever it finds a response, it is accompanied by the will to help, and this will to help, which is always one with the will of His Father in heaven, results in the act of mercy. To the observer these acts of mercy are miracles which prove the Lord's supernatural power. But it is significant that Jesus Himself declined to be a mere miracle worker. His miracles point to His divinity, but His divinity does not depend upon His miracles.

Intimately connected with the Lord's ministry of mercy, is His ministry of the word. In fact, we may say that Jesus was primarily the teacher. In the very beginning of His ministry, when His fame as a healer and physician had spread through the city of Capernaum, Jesus withdrew, and when His disciples found Him, He said to them: "Let us go elsewhere, into the neighboring villages, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out here" (Mark 1:38). We are often told in the Gospels that He went about, teaching in the synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. His disciples and others addressed Him as rabbi or teacher, and the very name "disciple"

implies that He was the teacher of those who followed Him; for a disciple is a learner or pupil. In the second half of His ministry the Lord devoted Himself especially to the instruction of His disciples, and on one occasion He said to them: "You shall not let anyone call you 'Rabbi,' for you have only one teacher, and you are all brothers" (Matt. 23: 8). In the garden Gethsemane He said to those who arrested Him: "Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching" (Mark 14: 48).

What did Jesus teach? The Apostolic Church did not distinguish between the message of Jesus and its own message. It rather emphasized the unity and identity of both. For this reason our Evangelists have applied to the Lord's teaching and preaching the missionary terms "the word of God" (Luke 5: 1) or "the Gospel" (Mark 1: 15). Yet it is an indisputable fact that Jesus did not preach the "Gospel" in the sense in which Paul preached it. Paul's preaching of the Gospel centered in the death and resurrection of the Lord. In the teaching of Jesus Himself His death and resurrection are clearly referred to only towards the end of His ministry. The reader who has followed our discussion, will readily understand the reason why this should be so: the message of salvation could not be proclaimed to the world before the Messiah had accomplished and finished His work. But a close examination of the Lord's teaching will also establish the fact that the Church's message of salvation is founded on the teaching of Jesus.

In general it may be said that the Lord's teaching is very comprehensive in its range and scope; it practically covers the whole field of God's revelation in the Old Testament. In large measure this is due to the fact that His teaching was of an occasional character.

Jesus is criticized by the scribes and Pharisees for His attitude to publicans and sinners. This criticism of His conduct calls forth the important statement that He came to call to repentance, not righteous but sinners (Mark 2:17).

His disciples do not fast. Jesus justifies their conduct by saying: "Can wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast" (Mark 2:19).

He and His disciples are accused of breaking the Sabbath. His answer is: "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath; therefore the Son of man is lord also of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27f).

The scribes from Jerusalem accuse Him of casting out demons in the power of Beelzebub, the prince of the demons. This charge is the occasion of the Lord's great discourse on Satan's kingdom. (Mark 3:20-30).

While teaching in a house in Capernaum He is informed that His mother and His brothers wish to see Him. We do not know the subject of His discourse. But the word which He spoke on that occasion, has been recorded: "Whosoever does the will of God, is my brother and sister and mother" (Mark 3:35).

It is no exaggeration to say that there is no important religious question upon which the Lord's teaching does not touch, or upon which it does not throw new light.

In the method of His teaching the Lord adapted Himself to His hearers. He made frequent use of parables and illustrations. But His aim was always the same: Not merely to instruct and to enlighten, but to lead men to the living God. When He taught He spoke as one who had authority, and the source of His authority was His perfect union with the Father.

Yet the teaching of the Lord was not altogether new. It was based upon God's revelation in the Old Testament, and it was intended to bring out the true meaning of God's revelation in the past. His teaching was both, reactionary and revolutionary. Revolutionary insofar as it departed from the teaching and practice of the scribes and Pharisees. Reactionary insofar as it had its source in the religion of the great prophets of Israel in the past. In this respect the teaching of the Lord may be summed up in the one word "righteousness," the right attitude of man to his God.

Intimately connected with the idea of righteousness in the teaching of Jesus is the idea of the Kingdom of God. This connection is clearly stated in Matt. 6:33: "Seek ye first His Kingdom and His righteousness." But it can be noticed in all His teaching, and it is the very center of the Lord's own message.

What is meant by "the Kingdom of God?" We have to distinguish between the popular meaning of the term and Jesus' conception.

At the time of Jesus the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of heaven, was an essential element of Jewish belief and hope. The idea itself sprang from the Jewish conception of God, and His relation to Israel as the chosen people of God, but the term was not coined until after the Exile, and was understood in the eschatological and apocalyptic sense (Daniel 2:44; 7:13f; 18:27). It had reference to God's reign and rule by the Messiah, first over Israel, then through Israel over the whole world.

Jesus proclaimed the coming of the Kingdom in terms and figures which were familiar to the people. But His own conception of the Kingdom was determined by His conception of God, just as His conception of God

determined His idea of righteousness. Therefore the Kingdom of God is nothing external. It is God's reign in the heart of man, which means the beginning of man's fellowship with God. Man realizes that God is not in the far distance, but the God in Whose very presence we live and move. He realizes that God is our Father, and we are His children, and that the highest aim of God's children is expressed in the words of Jesus: "Ye shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). Peculiar to God's children is first of all a spirit of humility: "Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein (Mark 10:15); and again: "Blessed are the poor, the meek, they that hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matt. 5:3ff). This new spirit is also a spirit of absolute trust and complete surrender. God's children cannot serve two masters; there can be no dualism in their lives; there must be sincerity of heart and singleness of purpose. God takes care of His children. Therefore it is unbelief not to trust in Him. This spirit of absolute trust finally expresses itself in the manner in which God's children approach their Father, and in approaching Him rely wholly on His mercy. But the same spirit determines and governs also the attitude of God's children to their brothers. The two commandments, in which Jesus sums up all religion, are really one. In other words, the life with God regulates all other life-relations. The new spirit which is the beginning of God's Kingdom, permeates and penetrates all spheres of human life and society, and eventually it must result in a new order of all things. Therefore the Kingdom is the greatest gift for which the disciples can pray, and it is also the highest good for which they can strive.

However, the most important and essential feature in the Lord's teaching concerning the Kingdom of heaven is His own relation to the Kingdom. It is God who establishes the Kingdom. But He establishes it through the Messiah. Jesus' Messianic self-consciousness is underlying His whole ministry, His ministry of the word as well as His ministry of mercy. John the Baptist pointed to "the coming man" who was to establish the Kingdom. Jesus pointed to Himself as the one who had been sent to establish the kingdom. For this reason the words of Jesus concerning Himself and His mission are the climax of His teaching, and His words concerning Himself and His mission culminate in the statement that the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give Him life a ransom for many.

THE NEW TESTAMENT IDEA OF FAITH

ALBERT T. W. STEINHAUSER

The supreme need of the Church at all times has been a clear and firm grasp of the idea of faith. Faith is the very life breath of the Christian religion. Hence it is not enough to believe that we believe; it is necessary actually to have faith and to have it in deed and in truth. In view of this necessity it is surprising to note the vagueness that surrounds the term. A study of Christian ideas would show that none of them has been subjected to greater fluctuation than the idea of faith. The problem is complicated by the fact that even in the New Testament writings it does not appear always to be used in a uniform sense. At the same time, through these writings as a whole, viewed historically, there does run, underneath all surface variations, a consistent use of the term. It is our purpose, in the following pages, to trace in outline the essential meaning of New Testament faith. There will be no attempt at exhaustiveness; we shall pay particular attention to those writings in which the idea of faith plays a prominent part.

I

The study of faith in the gospels must begin and end with the person and work of Jesus. A convenient starting point is offered by the passage in Heb. 12:2, in which Jesus is called "the author and perfecter of

faith.'"¹ The impression made by His life and career upon the writer of this great epistle, either through oral tradition or more probably through one of the gospels, was that of One whose entire ministry could be summed up in terms of faith.² This impression is borne out by the account given in the gospels of the life and work of Jesus. Not only is He in His own person and experience the perfecter of faith, but in His public ministry He is seen as the author or founder of faith. The synoptic record, consisting of a more or less objective narrative, is corroborated and supplemented by the idealistic interpretation given in the Fourth Gospel, through which the faith and the unbelief elicited by Jesus run as a double leit motif.

According to Mark 1:15 Jesus opened His public ministry with the proclamation of the appearance of the fulness of the time and the Kingdom of God, and with the twofold call to repentance and faith³ in the sphere of the gospel.⁴ In "repent" Jesus takes up the

¹ ὁ τῆς πίστεως ἀρχηγὸς καὶ τελειωτής.

It has been disputed whether ἀρχηγός should be rendered "author" (A. V.) or "captain" (R. V.). The word occurs in both meanings but if we take into account the testimony of the papyri and inscriptions, it seems that the former is the more accurate translation here: cf. Moulton-Milligan, *Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament*, i, 81, and Milligan, *New Testament Documents*, 75. This agrees better with the context of Heb. 12: 2. Jesus, appearing in point of time after the heroes of faith in Heb. 11, could not well be called the leader of faith, while, as "the same yesterday, today, and for ever" (Heb. 13: 8), and as the final revelation of God (Heb. 1: 1-2), He is properly the author or founder, as well as the perfecter of faith.

² We are not now concerned with the specific turn given in Heb. 11: 1 to the idea of faith, which was conditioned, as we shall see later, by the peculiar needs of the Christian community to which the epistle was addressed.

³ μετανοεῖτε καὶ πιστεύετε.

⁴ Thus the phrase ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ must be interpreted with Deissmann, *Die neutestamentl. Formel "in Christo Jesu,"* p. 46 f. and Moulton, *Grammar of New Testament Greek* (3d ed.), i, 67-8. Cf. Cremer-Kögel *Woerterbuch* (10th ed.), 907. There is therefore not the slightest reason for suspecting the passage.

message of the Baptist; "believe" represents His own particular message. And both repentance and faith, as He proclaims them, are to take place in the sphere, that is, under the influence of the gospel. In other words, the distinctive features of Jesus' preaching are evangelic repentance and evangelic faith, as distinguished from legalistic or Old Testament repentance and faith.⁵

At the same time, the faith as well as the repentance that Jesus taught was not something radically new, but had its roots deep in the religion of the Old Testament. The idea of faith does not, of course, play in the Old Testament anything like the important part that it plays in the New. As Lightfoot says, "It is indeed a characteristic token of the difference between the two covenants, that under the Law the 'fear of the Lord' holds very much the same place as 'faith in God,' 'faith in Christ,' under the Gospel. *Awe* is the prominent idea in the older dispensation, *trust* in the later." And yet it was a true instinct that guided the author of the epistle to the Hebrews when he drew up, in Chapter 11, his golden catalogue of Old Testament heroes of faith. The figure of Abraham, in particular, looms up as supreme hero of faith, not only in the Old Testament itself but in the thought of later Judaism. The classical passage is Genesis 15:6—"Abraham believed Jahweh, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."⁶

⁵ For a fine discussion of the interrelation of this repentance and faith, see Schlatter, *Die Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (1909), i, 292-4.

⁶ ἐπίστευσεν δὲ Ἀβρὰμ τῷ θεῷ, καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην.

The Greek dative, though a weakened translation of the Hebrew כִּי, which was כִּי־אֵלֹהִים denotes not mere intellectual belief but personal trust, is quoted by Paul in Rom. 4:3 as sufficiently strong for his purpose. (Cf. other constructions with the dative in Acts :5 14; 18:8; Titus 3:8). Gen. 15:6 is assigned to the E source, while 7 ff. belong to J, which makes the faith passage all the stronger in that Abraham does not here require a sign. Cf. O. Procksch, *Genesis* (1917), 287.

The amazing thing here is that, thus early and practically at its first appearance, faith is set forth almost in its pure state, as a personal relation of trust in a personal God revealing Himself as gracious by means of a specific promise or gift. This trust of Abraham in Jahweh is imputed to him as righteousness, *i. e.*, as the equivalent of a God-pleasing life. With good reason, therefore, Paul cites this passage as a proof that, already in Genesis, a good life was based, in true evangelic fashion, upon no work or merit of man.⁷ That Jahweh was justified in thus estimating the faith of Abraham is proved by the latter's willingness to surrender the promised gift in supreme confidence in the Giver (Genesis 22). Thus, at the very beginning, the paradoxical or non-rational element in faith is set in the foreground. (Cf. Hebrews 11:17-19).

It is not at all surprising that, in its later development, faith did not maintain itself at this ideal height. The specific gift by means of which God manifested His favor was only too often permitted to obscure the Giver and to become in itself the object of faith. The personal relation degenerated into national pride based on a conception of privilege and superiority. The emphasis upon the Law gave rise to a growing dependence on man's merit, ending in the mechanical piety of the Pharisees. The very Scriptures, in which God's personal revelation of grace was enshrined, were allowed to interpose themselves between the soul and its God,⁸ ending in the evils of Scribism (cf. John 5:39-40). This led to an externalization of the idea of faith and of religion as such. The process of externalization was

⁷ See Kautzsch, *Biblische Theologie des Alten Testaments*, 164.

⁸ Cf. even Ps. 119:66, where Jahweh, who was the object of Abraham's faith, is displaced by the law.

aided by the all too earthly colors in which the messianic kingdom was conceived and described. It was only in great national crises, and in the experience of religious geniuses, that the faith of Abraham revived. Despite the idealism of prophets and psalmists,⁹ the religion of the people consisted in a commercial give and take between God and man. Just as God was supposed to be satisfied with man's outward gifts, the bringing of animal sacrifices while the heart was far from Him, so man was thoroughly satisfied with God's gifts without any effort to penetrate through them to the heart of the Giver.

This whole development lay in the nature of the case. The faith of man is but the correlative of the grace of God. Hence it was impossible for faith to rise to its full stature until the grace of God appeared in such a way that His gift and person were one and the same and were no longer capable of being distinguished. In Jesus this grace of God appeared (Titus 2:11) in the form of faith itself. He is both the supreme manifestation of the grace of God and the supreme expression of the faith of man. The master purpose of His life and work was, by bringing God into as close communion with man as He Himself experienced, to lift believing man to as close communion with God as His own.

II

Thus Jesus arose with His message of faith, based on repentance, and existing in the sphere of the Gospel. As a wise householder, bringing forth out of his treasures things both new and old, He attached the new that He brought to the old that He found. Just as it was

⁹ e. g., Hosea 14: 2; Ps. 73: 35.

necessary for Him to adopt the patois of Canaan in order to be understood of the people, it was necessary to take as His starting point the current conception of faith as confidence in a gracious God revealing Himself by means of a specific gift, which gift, as we have seen, had become largely externalized and mechanized. It was the method of Jesus to stoop to the level of the people in order to lift them gradually to His own high plane.

In the life of the common people, among whom Jesus' work chiefly lay, temporal blessings, such things as Luther finds symbolized in the "daily bread" of the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer, occupied an all-important place. Even in the Old Testament prayer book length of days, health, and temporal prosperity were regarded as invariable marks of divine favor.¹⁰ On the other hand, poverty, disease, adversity, and brevity of life were considered marks of divine displeasure. In practical experience, especially in the post-exilic period after the breakdown of the feeling of national privilege, and with the development of personal responsibility, this belief gave rise to the problem: why must the righteous suffer? Why do the ungodly flourish? In the book of Job the problem became acute, although no actual solution was reached. The beginning of a solution was foreshadowed in the experience of Jeremiah¹¹ and, under his influence, in the mysterious figure of the Suffering Servant in Second Isaiah.

There was apparently a large number of persons in the days of our Lord, who, while not speculating on the

¹⁰e. g., Ps. 91: 15-16.

¹¹ Cf. Wellhausen, *Israelitische und juedische Geschichte* 143 f., and G. A. Smith, *Jeremiah: the Baird Lecture*, lect. vii: *The Story of His Soul*.

problem of evil in the spirit of those great writers, reflected the simpler piety of a group of psalms, and formed, as the late Professor William Sanday expressed it, "the special seedplot of Christianity." "It has been observed,"¹² writes Professor Sanday, "that there is a group of psalms (of which 9, 10, 22, 25, 35, 40, 69, 109 are the most prominent) in which the words translated in E. V. 'poor,' 'needy,' 'humble,' 'meek,' are of specially frequent occurrence. It appears that these words have acquired a moral meaning. From meaning originally those who are 'afflicted' or 'oppressed' (by men), they have come to mean those who in their oppression have drawn nearer to God and leave their cause in His hands. They are the pious Israelites who suffer from the tyranny of the heathen or of their worldly countrymen, and who refuse to assert themselves, but accept in a humble spirit the chastening sent by God. As there were many such in every period of the history of Israel, they may be said to form a class."¹³ It was to people of this class that Jesus addressed the Beatitudes, promising the divine blessing to the poor, the mourners, the meek, the persecuted, and it was among them that most of His miracles were performed.

From this point of view light falls upon the problem of "miracle faith." It has become customary to distinguish more or less sharply between "miracle faith" and "saving faith," and to marvel at the predominance of the former, especially in the synoptic record. But the distinction is fallacious. The faith that Jesus demanded and met in connection with His miracles was

¹² Especially by Rahlfs and Driver. Cf. *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, iv, 19-20.

¹³ *Outlines of the Life of Christ*, Ch. 8, pp. 22-23.

not faith in the temporal blessing as such, nor the belief that He was able to perform miracles, but trust in God revealing Himself as gracious by means of a visible, temporal gift. If we bear in mind that, no matter how heroically borne, poverty, disease (especially leprosy), and every sort of adversity could not but be regarded as marks of divine displeasure, it will become clear that the only way in which Jesus could awaken faith in a gracious God was by substituting for them equally tangible marks of divine favor and grace. In this sense John calls the miracles *σημεῖα*, signs or marks of the grace of God revealed in and through Jesus. They were the signs by which the grace of God was manifested *ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν*.

In this connection the conversation between Jesus and Martha in John 11:23-27 is most instructive. Jesus tells her, "Thy brother will rise again." She replies that she knows that will happen at the last day. Jesus recalls her faith from the future to the present, and from the external miracle to Himself as living and personal gift of God to her and her brother. He is the Resurrection and the Life; whoever believes in Him will live even though he die, and whoever lives and believes in Him will not die eternally. To His question whether she believes this, Martha's reply is, "Yea, Lord, I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, even He that cometh into the world." Here the so-called miracle faith is seen to be one with what is called saving faith. This is made still clearer by Jesus' words to Martha, when, after the raising of the stone from Lazarus' grave, she interposes. "Lord, by this time the body decayeth; for he hath been dead four days." Jesus saith unto her, "Said I not unto thee, that if thou believedst, thou shouldest see the glory of God?"

Jesus therefore refused to perform miracles, not only when the miracle as such was all that men sought, but when faith in a gracious God expressing Himself through the miracle was lacking. He marveled at the *ἀπιστία* in Nazareth and could not, in accordance with His principles, perform any miracles there (Mark 6:5-6). Conversely, He marveled at the trust of the Syrophenician (Mark 7:24-30). In the latter instance we find faith almost in its pure state. By her nationality this woman was outside the pale of Jesus' messianic ministry, but her faith leaped the barrier and proved itself to be no mere clinging to a visible gift, but able to penetrate even to the thoughts in the heart of the Giver. Therefore Jesus declared it to be "great" and granted her "what she would." Her companion in faith is the nobleman of Capernaum, at whose faith Jesus also marveled and the like of which He had not found in Israel (Matt. 8:10).

But the clearest illustration is the incident of the man sick of the palsy in Mark 2:1-12. Jesus "sees" the faith of the five men in the drastic measures the four bearers adopt, not without the consent of their sick friend, in order to reach Him, uncovering the roof and letting down bed and patient at His feet. Here, too, for the first, but doubtless not for the last time the spiritual miracle precedes the physical. Indeed, the latter seems to have been wrought for the sake of the scribes and Pharisees rather than for the palsied man himself. We might compare also the sharp distinction, in the story of the Samaritan leper, between being "cleansed" and being "made whole" (Luke 17:17-19).

We are thus prepared to go a step farther and say that along with Jesus' accommodation to the faith of His contemporaries, there went a constant effort to lift

this faith to a higher level, transcending the merely temporal and visible, and to lead it from the gift to the Giver Himself. This is seen above all in His making repentance the necessary precondition of faith. *Μετανοείτε καὶ πιστεύετε* that is, turn from self and the things of self to God.¹⁴ This tendency runs through Jesus' whole teaching about faith. The Beatitudes, though addressed to the "poor," promise only spiritual blessings. The entire Sermon on the Mount is concerned with the spiritualizing of the law of God and the life of man. All depends on a man's personal relation to the will of the Father. The Father's sovereignty and righteousness (what is sovereignty from the viewpoint of God is righteousness from that of man) are to be sought first of all, and everything temporal will be added. The petitions concerning the name, the kingdom, and the will of the Father in heaven precede those that deal with daily bread and even with forgiveness and deliverance from evil. Throughout, the keyword is "Father." This is Jesus' great name for God. If God be conceived and experienced as Father in heaven, the childlike cheerfulness and confidence which is faith must follow.

This lofty conception of faith occurs over and over again in the parabolic teaching of Jesus, in which the common events of everyday life are taken as symbols of the spiritual. The burden is, "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more your Father who is in heaven!" This faith Jesus is never weary of proclaiming in season and out of season. Where it is present all things are possible; in its absence He finds the source of all the ills of mankind.

¹⁴ This formula underlies the prepositional phrase *πιστεύειν εἰς τινα*.

Ἀπιστία is for Him the one sin (John 16:9). When He chides the Apostles it is because of their ὀλιγοπιστία, because they trust God so little (Matt. 8:26; 14:31). When He encounters faith it is a high and holy day in His life.

There is one passage in which the supreme value He placed upon faith is seen with particular clearness. It is His word to Peter in the night before His death. He foresees plainly what is coming—betrayal, flight, denial. All has been clearly foreshadowed in the quarrel as to which of the disciples is to be accounted greatest. Jesus tells Peter that Satan has obtained them by asking (cf. Job 1). As against the prayer of Satan, Jesus also has been praying for Peter, and the petition He made was not that Peter might not be tempted, nor even that he might not fall (for that would be a wholesome experience), but that his faith might not fail. For Jesus the one important thing was that underneath all weakness and cowardice and disloyalty and profanity, there might remain in Peter's breast a spark of faith capable of being fanned into a bright flame. In that case he would be able to strengthen his brethren, as he himself had been strengthened.

As the faith that Jesus taught was antecedent and superior to all outward expression, it was also independent of the logical and rational. All things are possible if one believes. The paradoxical, non-rational element in faith is strongly emphasized. For Jesus faith is removed as far as possible from mere intellectual belief. That is the meaning of the hyperbole in His saying, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matt. 17:20). There was no

apologetic in Jesus' teaching, no attempt to argue anyone into faith. Nicodemus, the master in Israel, is not the only one who has been taken aback by the non-rational element in our Lord's teaching. For Him the antithesis of faith is not intellectual doubt, but moral stumbling (Matt. 11:6). The antithesis of letting one's heart be troubled is to believe (John 14:1). 'Ἀπιστία is not doubt but lack of trust.¹⁵ This is shown most plainly in the case of the woman with an issue of blood, who coming from behind touched the hem of Jesus' garment. So little rational was her faith that it was almost smothered in superstition, yet to the eye of Jesus it existed and by His mercy it made her whole (Mark 5:15-34). The non-rational element in Jesus' teaching about faith is one of the main reasons why the common people heard Him gladly, and one of the secrets of His universal appeal.

III

Now, all Jesus' teaching about faith is but the expression of His own faith life. It is no theoretic doctrine, but the warm and living outflow of His inner experience. In every word that He spoke about faith there is felt the mighty throb of His own believing heart. This gives to His words their authoritative ring and their creative power. The effect of the faith of Jesus may be seen also in the childlike simplicity of His nature, in His humility and heroic strength, in the peace and joy that lay upon His whole life. But it is

¹⁵ "Auch von allen intellectuellen Ansprüchen hat Jesus den Glauben befreit. Das kommt dadurch zur Bezeugung, dass er Heiden grossen Glauben zuerkennt, so mangelhaft ihre Gedanken über Gott und den Christus gewesen sind. Weil sie in ihm mit Gewissheit Gottes Hilfe fassen, ist ihr Verhalten Glaube."—Schlatter, *Theol. des. N. T.*, i., 293.

seen with especial clearness in His prayers. It is an incredible omission in theological literature that there is no adequate treatment of the prayer life of Jesus. Even in Friedrich Heiler's magnificent book on prayer¹⁶ only one page is devoted to the prayers of Jesus, while Paul is given two pages. The author has missed a golden opportunity, for certainly there is more to be learned from a study of Jesus' prayer life than from all other researches in the history and psychology of religion. In 1899 Adolf Deissmann wrote for the "*Christliche Welt*" an article entitled "*Der Beter Jesus, ein vergessenes Kapitel der neutestamentlichen Theologie*," which is called by Heiler the most beautiful and profound discussion of prayer by any historian or psychologist. But it is merely a sketch. Its substance is made available for English readers in Deissmann's "*The Religion of Jesus and the Faith of Paul*," published early this year — a volume that is noteworthy for its sympathetic penetration into the religious life of Jesus."

A reverent study of the prayers of Jesus would lead into the very Holy of Holies of His faith, that living trust in a loving Father who heard Him always, that communion with God which has a faint parallel in the relation to Jesus of the beloved disciple. Is not this the meaning of the passage in the Fourth Gospel in which Jesus is said to have been, while on earth, in the

¹⁶ *Das Gebet. Eine religionsgeschichtliche und religionspsychologische Untersuchung* (5th ed., 1923).

¹⁷ A more popular work, with original treatment and many suggestive pages, is Prof. Jas. Alex. Robertson's *The Spiritual Pilgrimage of Jesus: the Bruce Lecture*, 1917. There are several good pages on *Das Beten Jesu* in Feine, *Die Religion des Neuen Testaments* (1921), 172-6.—The approach to Jesus from the viewpoint of prayer bids fair to lead nearer than any other to the secret of His personality.

bosom of the Father (John 1:18)? It is no wonder that the disciples, overhearing Him one day at His devotions, begged Him, "Lord, teach us to pray."

Indeed, long before the author to the Hebrews called Him the "Perfector of faith," He was looked up to on all sides as the Believer par excellence. As men listened to His words and observed His life, it seemed as though the days of Abraham, Moses, Jeremiah, and the great psalmists had returned. Only that He appeared to overtop them all. As the disciples asked Him, "Lord, teach us to pray," because they coveted His fervor of prayer, so they asked Him, "Lord, increase our faith," because they coveted the purity and strength of His faith. There is one pericope in particular that clearly illustrates this. At the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration the father of the epileptic boy appeals to Jesus, "If Thou canst do anything, help us." "If Thou canst!" is the reproachful answer. "He who believes can do anything." Then the father cried, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." That is to say: "I do believe, but compared with the energy of Thy faith my faith is the veriest unbelief; yet help even it."¹⁸ So profound was the impression made upon men's hearts and minds by the faith of Jesus. They felt that He not only demanded their faith, but showed them how to believe.

The faith life of Jesus reached its culmination in the days of His Passion. Here it endured its severest strain and attained its greatest strength. This is again seen with especial clearness in His prayers. As His life approaches and meets its supreme crisis, His prayers become more frequent and more fervent, and in them

¹⁸ Deissmann also uses this illustration, in his above-mentioned book, pp. 96-7.

the throb of faith is more plainly felt. In the energy of prayer His faith enters into the most intimate communion both with the deepest needs and longings of man and with the saving will of God. One of the most significant prayers of the Passion is the above-mentioned intercession for Peter, that his faith fail not. Such a prayer could have been offered only by one whose own trust in God was unshakable. The Synoptists emphasize, in the Gethsemane agony, the passive side of Jesus' faith; the fourth Evangelist, in the high priestly intercession, dwells upon its active character. Of the words on the cross, three are prayers. The first and last words are stamped with Jesus' characteristic address, "Father." The last word is a quotation from the Psalter with His own authentic "Abba" prefixed, whereby it becomes His very own, much as we turn the psalms into Christian prayers by adding the Gloria Patri. Most illuminating of all is the fourth word on the cross, where in the lowest depths of physical and mental anguish, and feeling Himself abandoned by God as well as by man, Jesus does not lose His faith, but with no token at all of divine favor, but every mark of divine displeasure, holds blindly, if we may so put it, to mere God. It is the supreme exemplification of the paradox of faith. In the moment of God-forsakenness Jesus experiences the perfection of communion with God. Here He becomes in very truth the "Perfecter of faith," who carried trust in God to its supreme height.

From this point of view another New Testament problem appears not hopelessly insoluble, namely the question how Jesus, from being the Hero of faith, could become the Object of faith. No one has stated this problem more pointedly than the late Göttingen pro-

fessor, Wilhelm Bousset, in his famous book, *Kyrios Christos* (1913). Bousset's attempted solution of the problem cannot, however, be regarded as doing justice to all the facts. Whatever the influence of the hellenistic mystery religions upon certain phases of New Testament thought and expression, there is in this particular instance not the least occasion to go so far afield. It is only when a development cannot possibly be accounted for on inner grounds that one is justified in seeking for external influence. But that is emphatically not the case with the central fact of Christianity. From Jesus the Founder and especially the Perfecter of faith it is but a step to Jesus the Object of faith, particularly if we bear in mind two important facts.

The first is the resurrection of Jesus, correctly understood. The mere physical miracle has no more value than any other miracle of Jesus regarded as miracle. Of the Resurrection also His word is true, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." His last beatitude concerns those who believe without having seen. The Resurrection, properly interpreted, is the vindication of Jesus' faith. In it we have the crowning expression of divine favor. All other gifts of God whereby He revealed Himself as gracious are overshadowed by this. "Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift." God in love gave Jesus to the world (John 3:16) not only in His birth but especially in His resurrection. The gift is the Hero of faith, rewarded for a faith that was the most intimate communion with God. The gift becomes, therefore, so closely identified with the Giver that for faith there can no longer be any distinction between the two. The transition from the faith of Jesus to the Jesus of faith is indicated not only in the Fourth Gospel, in which Thomas is portrayed as

the first to call the risen Jesus his Lord and his God. It finds expression also in Matthew, who presents the risen Christ, to whom is given all authority in heaven and earth, sending His disciples to baptize into His name as equal with that of the Father and the Holy Spirit.

But Jesus is never conceived as object of faith in such a way as to displace faith's ultimate object, which is God. This is the second thing to be borne in mind. If this fact is given its full value, there can be no question of a deflection of the idea of faith from the synoptic Jesus to the *κύριος* of Paul and John. It is significant that these two writers, who place the very highest estimate upon the person of Jesus, are the very ones who most clearly keep the ultimate object of faith unobscured. Paul, in what is perhaps his most rapturous passage dealing with the *κύριος χριστός*, subordinates all "to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:11). And John, in the passage in which he makes Jesus directly co-ordinate faith in Himself with faith in the Father (John 14:1) leaves no doubt as to the distinction. In the light of John 14:6, "Believe in God, believe also in me" can mean only, "Believe in God as the goal of your way, believe in me as the way to your goal."

Our interpretation is confirmed by a study of faith in the Acts of the Apostles, especially in the earlier half of the book. Indeed, the whole book of the Acts presents the religious life of the early Christians as the result of the activity of the ascended Christ working through the instrumentality of the Apostles. While the first volume of Luke's great historical work dealt with "all that Jesus began both to do and to teach," the second volume records the Acts of the ascended Lord.

Not only does faith perform miracles through the name of Jesus (Acts 3:16; 4:30), but there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12). Peter's command on the day of Pentecost, "Be baptized into the name of Jesus," is in effect a resumption of Jesus' message, "Repent and believe" (Mark 1:15). He is Lord of all (Acts 10:36). The faith of the early Christians was faith in Jesus. This is revealed in their prayers. Stephen's dying word, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," is the first prayer addressed to the heavenly Lord. Here Jesus is both object and exemplar of faith, as Stephen addresses directly to Him the petition He addressed to the Father. Christians are known as those who call on the name of the Lord (Acts 9:14, 21; 22:16).

At the same time, faith in Jesus and prayer to Him are not permitted to displace God as the ultimate object of both faith and prayer. It was God, as Peter declares in his pentecostal discourse, who approved Jesus by powers and wonders and signs which God did by Him, and it was God who raised Him up (Acts 2:22-23). "God made Him both Lord and Christ" (2:36). "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Servant Jesus" (Acts 3:13). The message of the Apostles is the Word which God sent forth, preaching the Gospel of peace through Jesus Christ (Acts 10:36). Though Stephen's prayer to Jesus was not without successors, yet prayer was addressed as a rule to the Father. The believers (Acts 2:47) and the lame man (Acts 3:8, 9) praise God. The prayer before the election of Matthias is offered to God. The beautiful congregational prayer in 4:24-30 ends with the formula, "in the name of Thy holy Servant Jesus." Both the address and the close

are altogether in the spirit of Jesus, who, according to the Fourth Gospel, enjoined prayer to the Father in His name.

Thus it appears that pre-Pauline Christianity held fundamentally to the same conception of faith as Paul, and that the fuller development in the Pauline epistles, though bearing the peculiar stamp of the Apostle's religious genius, by no means denotes a deflection of the idea of faith.

IV

Paul is pre-eminently the Apostle of faith. In his epistles we find the most complete and many-sided elaboration of the idea of faith. Although, as we should expect in the case of so original a genius, there are distinctive features, the development as a whole lies altogether along the line which we have traced in the Gospels and the Acts. Paul's distinctive contribution is conditioned by the peculiarity of his personal experience and by the antithesis of the Judaizers.

Ever since the day at Damascus, when God shined in Paul's heart revealing His glory in the face of Jesus Christ, for Paul to live was Christ. What God had been to Jesus, Jesus became to Paul. Hence Professor Deissman can formulate very correctly the subtitle of his latest book in the parallel phrases, "The Communion of Jesus with God and the Communion of Paul with Christ." It is the merit of Deissmann to have pointed out the crucial importance of the phrase "in Christ," in which the faith of Paul finds its characteristic expression. The classical passage is Galatians 2:20, according to which Paul stood in such intimate communion with Christ that he could say interchangeably, "Christ lives in me," and "I live in Christ." His en-

tire life was contained within the sphere of faith, "the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." Deissman finds in the genitive used with *πίστις* only another form of the prepositional phrase with *ἐν* and calls it attractively a "*genitivus communionis*" or a "mystical genitive." Whether this relation to Christ is correctly termed mysticism, may be doubted; it is perhaps better to speak of a mystical element in Paul's religion. Certainly the characteristic marks of what is technically called mysticism are lacking," and it is impossible to trace in the Pauline idea of faith any definite influence by the mystery religions.²⁰

The fellowship of faith with the heavenly Jesus makes Paul a sharer in all that Jesus did and is. This is expressed in the most vivid and realistic fashion. The Christian has been crucified with Christ, he has died with Christ, he has been buried with Christ, he is risen with Christ, he sits in heavenly places with Christ. In short, he has become, in Luther's graphic phrase, "*ein Kuchen mit Christo*." Yet, so far from being absorbed, in genuine mystical fashion, in the divine, and losing his own personality, Paul is not only in Christ, but Christ lives in him. His communion with Christ becomes therefore a communion with man, after the example and by the power (the Spirit) of Christ. His faith, in other words, is a faith that worketh by love. Hence Paul the Apostle of faith sings the great pæan of Christian love (I Corinthians 13). The profound christological passage in Philippians 2 has for its immediate purpose the practical admonition to have "the

¹⁹ Heiler, in the latest edition of his book, *Das Gebet*, directly contrasts "Mystik" and "Glaubensfrömmigkeit."

²⁰ Cf. W. H. P. Hatch, *The Pauline Idea of Faith in its relation to Jewish and Hellenistic Religion* (Harvard Theol. Studies, ii), 1917.

same mind" that was in Christ Jesus, just as in every Pauline epistle the doctrinal part is followed by a practical application to everyday life.

The Philippian passage is important in another respect, as we have seen. It brings out the fact that with all his "Christ-mysticism" Paul never loses sight of God as the ultimate object of faith. If all things belong to Paul, and Paul belongs to Christ, Christ belongs to God (I Corinthians 3:22-23). His faith clings ultimately to the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, from which he is persuaded that nothing shall ever separate him (Rom. 8:38-39). This is confirmed by a study of Paul's prayers. Although in II Corinthians he prays, in the spirit of his predecessor Stephen, to Jesus Himself, his prayers are generally addressed to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Such a conception of faith is by its very nature removed as far as possible from mere intellectual belief. It includes the element of knowledge, indeed one of its master passions is to know the love of Christ, but this love passeth knowledge (Eph. 3:19), as the peace of God passeth all understanding (Phil. 4:7). It is true that faith²¹ comes by hearing, but hearing comes by the Word of Christ, in which He imparts His very self, not information about Himself (Romans 10:17). In the phrase *ἀναλογία τῆς πίστεως* (Romans 12:6) faith is emphatically not the *fides quae creditur*, but the personal trust of the heart in God. According to the measure in which it has been imparted to them (verse 3) Christians are to prophesy. When Paul refers to Christian *γνώσις* he is deliberately opposing faith to a false *γνώσις*. In the same spirit he speaks ironically of the

²¹ There is not the slightest reason for translating *πίστις* in this passage by "belief," as in the R. V.

“foolishness of preaching.” For those for whom old things have passed away and all things become new, it is impossible to know *κατὰ σάρκα* (II Corinthians 5:16-17).

Paul's conception of Justification by faith was brought into the foreground by his polemic against the Judaizers. But it is hardly correct to say with Deissman that “the fact that it is so prominent in Paul's letters that have come down to us, has less an inner than an outer cause.”²² The struggle with the Judaizers had necessarily to be fought out first in the mind of the Apostle, that “Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless” (Phil. 3:5-6). Indeed, the whole intimate personal confession in Philippians 3 is worthy of careful study and shows the close relation between justification by faith and Paul's so-called mystical experience. It was just because Paul took with the utmost seriousness the grace of God, of which he found in Jesus the supreme expression, that for him faith was always justifying faith. This side, indeed, can never be lacking in faith, which is but the correlative of the free grace of God. Hence Paul can appeal in confirmation of his experience to the faith of Abraham. The specific formulation of his doctrine and the elaborate technique of his polemic may be owing to “an outer cause,” but the conception itself of justifying faith can have none but an inner cause. After all, it was Luther who best understood Paul when, in the stress of his search for a gracious God, and in the joy of his discovery, he found in justification by faith the heart and center of Pauline,

²² *The Religion of Jesus and the Faith of Paul*, 271.

and indeed of New Testament, religion. "The only fit commentator on Paul," as Coleridge said, "was Luther—not by any means such a gentleman as the Apostle, but almost as great a genius."²³ In fact, the paragraphs on faith in Luther's preface to Romans, in his New Testament translation of 1522, are a complete summary of the Pauline conception of faith.

V

When we come to the four New Testament writings that stand last in Luther's German Bible—Hebrews, James, Jude, and Revelation—we are compelled to say that they appear, also from the viewpoint of faith, as *deutero-canonical*.

The epistle to the Hebrews comes closest to the conception of faith that we have found in the Gospels, the Acts, and in Paul. But the great faith-chapter (11) stands out so prominently that it overshadows all else and imposes its peculiar quality upon the epistle as a whole. The so-called definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1 is really not a definition at all, but a description of faith as faithfulness, in the spirit of Habakkuk 2:4, which passage is quoted in its original meaning at the close of chapter 10. This treatment of faith is conditioned by the practical needs of the Christian community which the author is addressing. He writes to Christians in danger of relapsing²⁴ and undertakes to show them not only the superiority of the Gospel of

²³ *Table Talk*, entry of June 15, 1533.

²⁴ The specific purpose of Hebrews is admirably set forth in Riggenbach's treatment of the epistle in Zahn's *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament* (1923). James Moffatt's exposition of Hebrews in the International Critical Commentary series, just announced, has not yet arrived.

Jesus to Old Testament religion, but its fulfilment of all that was best in that religion. How shameful, then, if Christian believers should fall behind the saints of the Old Testament! The faith of the latter, and indeed faith as such, has always had in it the element of boldness and patient endurance, of certainty and unshaken hope. Hence the catalogue of heroes and heroines of such faith, surrounding the Christian believer like a crowd of spectators in the amphitheatre, and cheering him on. Of this faith Jesus is the author (as He is the author²⁵ of salvation in 5:9) and the perfecter. However moving this appeal, and however necessary this emphasis on the heroic constancy of faith, the "definition" is unfortunately worded. To speak of the object of faith as a neuter plural (*ἐλπιζόμενα*) and as things (*πράγματα*) is certainly a departure from the essential idea of faith as personal trust in a gracious God.²⁶ It is true that elsewhere in the epistle we have "faith in God" (*πιστὶς ἐπὶ θεόν* 6:1), and in 13:8, as a sort of climax, the watchword: "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever." Yet chapter 11 gives its character to the epistle as a whole. So that faith becomes practically synonymous with hope. Indeed, these two terms are used interchangeably in 6:11 ("fulness of hope") and in 10:22 ("fulness of faith"). And in 10:23 there is the admonition, "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope."²⁷

²⁵ *Αἴτιος*.

²⁶ Cf. also Heb. 11:3 and 6.—I have just seen the latter passage quoted under a beautiful picture entitled "Faith," and portraying a young maiden with hands clasped across her breast and eyes raised to heaven. There can hardly be a more serious distortion of the idea of faith than this.

²⁷ The curious mistranslation in A. V., "the profession of our *faith*," is apparently without manuscript authority. It seems to be either a slip of the King James revisers or a printer's error. Tyndale has "hope."

This emphasis on the "hope" side of faith appears also in First Peter,²⁸ and to such an extent that Peter has traditionally been accepted as the Apostle of hope.²⁹

The epistle of James represents a more strongly marked deviation from the prevailing New Testament idea of faith. We can understand how Luther, coming from Paul to James, could not but speak of the latter as "an epistle of straw," with scarcely any of the marks of the Gospel. In itself the epistle is one of the most valuable books of the New Testament. "The worst of James," writes a distinguished English novelist and autobiographer,³⁰ "was that, when a sermon was preached from his Epistle, there was always danger lest somebody in the congregation should think that it was against him it was leveled." It is only from the viewpoint of faith that its limitations appear.

There is a single reference to "the faith of our Lord Jesus, who is the Glory" (2:1), and in 1:6 the faith of prayer, as in 5:15 the prayer of faith, is emphasized. But the epistle takes its tone from the discussion of faith in chapter 2, and here the conception of faith hardly rises above that of mere intellectual belief. "The demons also believe, and shudder,"³¹ may possibly be meant as bitter irony heaped upon an imaginary opponent, and Moffatt's rendering of verse 18 is very attractive; and yet the whole argument in this

²⁸ See I Peter 1: 21; 3: 5, and especially 3: 15, where "a reason for the hope that is in us" is a close parallel to "the confession of our hope" (Heb 10: 23).

²⁹ Cf. the magnificent burst of praise in 1: 3 ff.

³⁰ William Hale White in the *Early Life of Mark Rutherford*.

³¹ Tyndale, contrasting Paul and James, says in his quaint style: "The devil hath no promise; therefore he is excluded from Paul's faith. The devil believeth that Christ died, but not that He died for his sins."—*The Obedience of a Christian Man* (toward the close of chapter xii, *The Duty of Kings*, etc.).

chapter loses its point unless we assume that the writer shares his opponent's notion of faith. Anyone, no matter how firmly he holds to faith as an active principle, who can compare it to the body while he compares works to the animating spirit, is operating, to say the least, with an emasculated idea of faith. And to speak of faith as being "completed" (ἐτελειώθη) by works (2:22) is to set in motion a trend of thought that is bound to work havoc in the development of Christian doctrine.

The writer of this article may be pardoned, and perhaps even thanked, if he sets down here Luther's written notes on the margin of his copy of the New Testament (1530), as published in the Weimar edition of his works, "*Deutsche Bibel*," volume iv (1923).

Ad 1:6—"Optimus unus locus huius Epistolae."

2:12—Also redet und also thut. "Ey welch ein Chaos."

2:19—Dass ein einiger Gott ist; "und nicht viel von Christo."

2:22—Und durch die Werke, ist der Glaube vollkommen worden; "ja das reimet sich fein."

2:24—"Falsum."

2:26—Denn gleich wie der Leib on Geist, etc. "O ein schön Gleichniss, wende dich Freyheit."

2:26—Also auch der Glaube ohne Werke, etc. "Also sind die Werke ohne Glauben todt."

3:1—Unterwinde sich nicht iederman; "utinam nec tu."

5:16—Des Gerechten Gebet. "*Hic optimus est locus in tota hac Epistola.*"

The intellectualizing of faith in James must be carefully distinguished from the emphasis that falls in First John, as in the Fourth Gospel, upon "know-

ledge." As we have seen in discussing Paul, this is a deliberate setting of faith as true *γνῶσις* over against the false *γνῶσις* of the time. The co-ordination of *knowing* and *believing* the love of God, in I John 4:16, has its parallel in Ephesians 3:19.³² A faith that consisted in mere intellectual belief could not possibly be called "the victory that has overcome the world" (I John 5:4).

In the little letter of Jude we have a hardening of the idea of faith into the idea of Christian doctrine or tradition.³³ "The faith once for all delivered unto the saints" (verse 3), for which the readers are to contend earnestly, and "your most holy faith" (20), on which they are to build themselves up, can mean nothing else than the "*fides quae creditur*."

In the Revelation works play an important part, in the spirit of James,³⁴ and faith is practically synonymous with faithful endurance, after the fashion of Hebrews.³⁵ In 14:12 the "objective faith" of Jude reappears. The saints are commended as "those who kept the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" (cf. 12:17). Not only are works and faith combined here in typically Jewish fashion,³⁶ but faith as *credenda* is subordinated to the law as *agenda*. This is thoroughly in the spirit of Jude, and forms with that epistle the lowest point in the development of the New Testament idea of faith.

³² Cf. John 17:3.

³³ Cf. Mayor, *The Epistle of St. Jude and the Second Epistle of St. Peter*" (1907), pp. 60-71.

³⁴ Rev. 2:23; 14:13; 20:12, 13; 22:12.

³⁵ Rev. 2:10, 13; 3:14; 13:10; 17:14; 19:11.

³⁶ Cf. Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums*, 225 f.

THE CHURCH AND THE MISSION OF CHRIST

A STUDY IN DOGMATICS

JOHN C. MATTES

“Did God let down from heaven a barren dogma in order to establish His Church on earth? Why did the Only-begotten have to come in the flesh? Why did His disciples boast of the fact that they had touched and handled Him?” At talented writer of a former generation asks the question, and answers it by saying, “Because the physically visible Lord wished also to establish a visible Body of the Church, growing out of Himself (the corn of wheat), as a spiritual-corporeal organism.”¹ However much we might question some of Rocholl’s positions, we must acknowledge the fact that the Church is a living reality, and that the doctrine of the Church can only be understood in the light of accomplished facts and in connection with our Lord’s earthly life. The Church is a great historic fact and not a mere offspring of theological speculation. Most of the prevalent errors concerning the doctrine of the Church have come from the neglect of its historic character as given in Scripture. That lack of historic comprehension shows itself in the various additions and subtractions of current teachings. Rome, with her pseudo-historical traditions, her legendary additions and her fiction of an unwritten revelation, that now finds

¹ Rudolf Rocholl, *Einsame Wege*, Leipsic, 1898. II, p. 337.

expression through a special papal inspiration, is just as hopelessly unhistorical as the latest sect that tries to establish a Church *de novo*.

To understand the doctrine of the Church we must turn back to our Lord's own mission of redemption. In the New Testament we will find the nature of the Church gradually unfolded before us like the blossoming of a beautiful flower. First we see it in the bud, yet unopened, as we discover it in the implications and intimations of our Lord's life and teaching, that finally come to explicit declarations. Then we behold it expanding in all its beauty and loveliness in the apostolic understanding that followed the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, and finally we experience it as a present reality of unfading beauty, that is filling all the earth with its divine fragrance—the sweet smelling savour of a heavenly grace.

So the Church is historic not only in the sense of being a certain institution that appeared at a given time in history but also as a present reality, that grows out of the historic facts of redemption and is inextricably associated with all of them. It does not spring from some thesis found in the preaching of Paul nor has it developed from some mystical ideas taught by John, but it is a part of the historic activity of Jesus Christ and by an inner necessity is included in His redemptive mission. It must be understood, not as a separate locus (Protestant scholasticism), nor as the foundation of a theological system (Rome), nor even as the expression and outcome of a subjective relation (Schleiermacher), but as an integral part of God's providential order and as an indissoluble factor of the whole plan of salvation.

I. THE CHURCH AS INCLUDED IN THE MISSION OF JESUS CHRIST

I. THE FIRST INTIMATIONS IN THE GOSPELS

The Church and the Kingdom

Here, in the consideration of the mission of Christ, we must gain our first understanding of the Church, but not a complete comprehension of its nature, which is only unfolded in the course of historic revelation. This revelation, coming in progressive steps, is bound up with the gradual revelation of the Holy Trinity to mankind. First, through primitive revelation, and through the law and the prophets, had come the revelation of the will of God *towards* men; then, in the person of the Incarnate Logos, the revelation of His work *for* men, and last, through the outpouring and continued presence of the Holy Ghost, the revelation of His activity *within* the hearts of men. Till this latter stage was reached it was as impossible to make men understand the complete doctrine of the Church as it was to teach them a complete doctrine of the atonement. In both cases the necessary historic events had to come first. That is perhaps the reason why our Lord is so fond of using the term the Kingdom of God, or of Heaven, rather than the expression the Church, while with the Apostles the situation is exactly reversed. They speak of the Church rather than of the Kingdom.² The Kingdom of God is the most

² In the Gospels the word *ἐκκλησία* is used only twice (Matt. 16: 18 and 18: 17) while in the rest of the New Testament (omitting Acts 7: 38; 19: 32, 39, 41, and Hebrews 2: 12; 12: 23) it occurs 109 times. On the other hand the word *βασιλεία* is used 109 times in the Gospels, referring to God's Kingdom, while in all the rest of the New Testament it is only used 27 times for the same purpose.

general and comprehensive term for the whole of God's plan of redemption and the divine power that will accomplish it. It includes everything from the eternal decrees of God to the ultimate Parusia. How it is prior to the establishment of the Church and includes those who preceded Pentecost is seen in Matt. 8:11; Luke 13:28; Matt. 11:12; Luke 16:16; while the apocalyptic discourses show how it is concerned not only, like the Church, in the final perfection of men's souls but that it involves a new heaven and a new earth, together with the absolute and final overthrow of the opposing powers of evil. The Church is concerned in liberating and delivering the souls of men from the dominion of the ever-present powers of evil. After that work of the Church is completed the final triumphant coming of the Kingdom still requires the elimination of those powers from the possibility of any contact with the redeemed, their final punishment together with the souls of the unbelieving. Between these two limits, as far as revelation gives any intimations, the Kingdom of God and its organ, the Church, are identical.

The Church, on the other hand, is the activity of God's Kingdom as it comes into actual contact, either for good or for evil, with humanity; a contact which in its present form was not permanently established till the day of Pentecost. With this in mind we can readily see how the teaching of Christ must be supplemented and interpreted by that of the Apostles, but the fact of the Church is so completely included in the mission of Christ that even without any apostolic teaching on the subject we would be forced to recognize the necessity of its existence. The Apostles wrote about the Church not for the purpose of establishing it, but because it had already come into being and they were a part of it. We turn

then to a consideration of our Lord's mission as we learn it from His own words and deeds.

CHRIST'S MISSION AS DESCRIBED BY HIMSELF

When we turn to our Lord's simplest declarations concerning His mission we find at once clear statements of its spiritual and redemptive purpose that is to be accomplished by the preaching of the truth; the proclamation of God's revelation to the world. No rising tide of popularity can hold Him in one place but He must hurry on to the next towns "that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth." (Mark 1:38, Luke 4:43-44). The inquiry of John the Baptist concerning His Messiahship is answered not only by the evidence of miracles of mercy but by the fact of the blessings of the Gospel, that are imparted only through Him (Matt. 11:4-6; Luke 7:22-23). The final goal of His mission is the redemption of mankind and His work is to minister salvation as well as to procure it (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45). The prophetic announcements of salvation are realized in His activity (Luke 4:21), and that activity a quest of the lost, a going out to bring back the wanderers (Luke 19:10, Matt. 18:11). This mission of salvation was to result in the gathering together of the redeemed, for even in this world the mission of Jesus brought visible results. It soon gathered a band of disciples for whom He prays that they may be kept united in one fellowship (John 17:4-6, 21), but this fellowship of a few Jewish disciples is not to be the end of His work. In the same prayer He includes those who shall believe through the disciple's word and elsewhere expressly states that out-

siders are to be added to their number (John 10:16).

One thing that the Lord particularly stressed concerning His mission was its divine origin and authority. The people who heard Him were not mistaken in the impression they received of His teaching (Matt. 7:28-29; 13:54; Mark 1:22; 6:2; Luke 4:32), for He expressly insists on His authority. This authority not only makes Him superior to the Sabbath (Matt. 12:6-8; Mark 2:28) and qualified to determine what should be allowed in the temple (John 2:13-17; Matt. 21:12; Mark 11:15; Luke 19:45, but by virtue of its possession He forgives sins (Matt. 9:6; Mark 2:10; Luke 5:24; 7:48), He claims to be the only source of life, truth and salvation (John 14:6), His teaching will be the basis of the future judgment (John 12:47-49), and in that judgment He will have part (John 5:27; Matt. 26:64; Mark 14:62; Luke 22:69), indeed He Himself will be the Judge (Matt. 19:28; 25-31 seq.). All this is based on the fact that He is from above (John 8:23), and that He has been sent from God (John 3:2; 4:34; 5:30; 6:38), who has given all things into His hands (Matt. 11:27; 28:18; Luke 10:22; John 3:35; 13:3), that He might bring salvation to all mankind.

So our Lord's mission was a mission of holiness that was effective. Its power lay not simply in an appeal to the understanding of men but in a real spiritual power overcoming the powers of darkness, particularly in the driving out of demons, and a power that could on occasion be delegated to His disciples, but that resided in the person of Christ, that was communicated sometimes by word and sometimes by touch and even by a mere expression of His will, but which was always used for the work He had been commissioned to do.

CHRIST'S MISSION AS DESCRIBED BY OTHERS

While others were particularly impressed by the power He manifested (Matt. 8:27; Mark 4:41), they also appreciated how important His teaching was to His mission and by their association of the two in many references show that they understand His significance as a teacher as well as one possessed of divine powers (Matt. 4:23; 9:45; Mark 1:14; 6:5-6; Luke 8:1). Indeed, John the Baptist stated that His mission will result in the separation of good and evil (Matt. 3:11-12; Luke 3:16-17), and that it had as its purpose redemption from sin (John 1:29).

CHRIST'S MISSION AS IT INVOLVES A DISCIPLESHIP

When we turn to the Gospel accounts of the manner in which the Lord carried out His mission, we find that an outstanding characteristic of His activity is the fact that, while He alone can effect His purposes, He nevertheless gathers to Himself certain chosen disciples, whose duty it is not only to hear and learn but also to become apostles to others. The very beginning of His public career is marked by the calling of a special group of disciples. Immediately after the Baptism certain inquirers are invited to "come and see" (John 1:35-51). After the temptation and with the beginning of His active ministry He selects the first of the Apostles with the express promise that they shall have the mission of being "fishers of men" (Matt. 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:10-11). To these others were added (Matt. 9:9; Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27-28), till the mystical number of twelve was complete. This band was of enough importance that three Evangelists, who passed by the account of so many miracles without giv-

ing any particulars concerning them, and who even failed to report many of the Lord's sermons, thought it a matter of sufficient importance to record exact lists of the names of those He selected (Matt. 10:1-4; Mark 3:14-19; Luke 6:13-16). Something more than personal interest or mere vanity led to the recording of these lists. Here we have the beginning of a congregation of believers associated with the mission of the Lord; the nucleus from which the future Church was to grow. It was not an indefinite number of sympathetic souls, who at various times might have shown some spiritual affinity for the Kingdom of God, or who chanced to have a personal interest in Christ, but a definite number of men, whose names are carefully specified, and who were selected and called by Christ, as they are afterwards specifically reminded (John 15:16; cf. John 6:70; 13:18). Their vocation, like that of the Lord was a divine call and not the result of their own, purely human, decision.

THE DISCIPLES ARE REQUIRED TO CONFESS CHRIST

Obedience was required from these first disciples to make their vocation effective. They were included in this original company not by a mechanical compulsion or an automatic grace, but through a faith that obeyed the call. Their appointment was no *opus operatum* achieved by Christ's will. He required their free submission; a requirement that is extended to all who would become His disciples. Furthermore as the Lord came not to teach in secret but publicly (John 18:20-21), so their allegiance could not be a mere secret sympathy, but required a public profession of faith that had to

be made, no matter what it cost. By their own confession they were to be marked out and known to the world as His followers. Their very salvation depended on it. (Matt. 10:32-33, 38; 16:24; Mark 8:34, 38; Luke 9:23, 26; 12:8-9; 14:26-27; 19:38-40). It was a *sine qua non* of discipleship. Men might, for a time, be secret followers but they could not remain such if they were true followers, as in the cases of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. The Lord expressly said that failure to side with Him was to be against Him, that not only professed opponents but even the would-be neutrals were His enemies (Matt. 12:30; Luke 11:23). Confession and discipleship was the transcendent moral duty, the great imperative that was to come before the claims of any human relationships (Matt. 8:21-22; Luke 9:59-62), and neither worldly riches, comfort nor business should stand in its way (Matt. 19:21; Mark 10:21; Luke 18:22).

But it is to be clearly noted that this does not mean a connection with some particular company of disciples, a select band or a particular form of organization. When the disciples complained that they saw a man who was not in immediate outward connection with themselves, casting out devils in the name of Jesus, they were told, "He that is not against us is on our part" (Mark 9:38-40; Luke 9:49-50). Words that are neither a contradiction of the other statement, "He that is not with *me*," (Here it is "*us*"), "is against *me*," nor do they constitute a paradox, but they deal with different situations and dissimilar matters. They make very clear that discipleship does not depend on a merely mechanical bond established by some particular kind of external organization.

THE MYSTICAL UNION

The all important matter is the relation of the disciple to the Lord. Where a sincere confession has sprung from a real faith there results a mystical union of the disciple with the Lord, and a spiritual relationship has been established that is greater than any earthly kinship (Matt. 12:49-50; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21), and that assures His spiritual presence even when physically absent (Matt. 18:20). The deeds done to His disciples touch Him (Matt. 25:40). St. John is particularly fond of emphasizing this consequence of discipleship. He records the Lord's words that describe it as a mutual incorporation, like the assimilation of food by the body (6:56); he tells how it brings an assurance of protection with it (10:27-28), and describes it as so vital and intimate that it imparts spiritual life as a vine brings life to its branches (15:1-6). It is a bond that is even similar to the divine relationship between the Father and the Son (17:21, 26).

IMPLIES SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD

The great prayer of intercession makes it clear that this spiritual union with Christ will lead to a certain antagonism to the world. While the Kingdom of God and the State were separate domains and both ordained of God; while the civil duties owing earthly rulers were to be faithfully discharged, Cæsar being rendered the things that were his, nevertheless the spirit of the world, the secular spirit and the spirit of Christ were at odds. Each was a fundamental negation of the other and a combination of the two, or a coalition of any sort was impossible. The desire of the world for pretentious

signs and idle shows was not to be gratified (Matt. 12:38-42; 16:1-4; Mark 8:12). His place was not to interfere in secular disputes (Luke 12:14), neither was it His purpose to attain spiritual ends by forcible means or by coercing men through supernatural powers, even though He was able to do so. Accordingly Peter is admonished to refrain from the use of physical means for His protection (Matt. 26:52-53; John 18:10-11). Standing before Pilate He reaffirmed His previous statement, that "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation" (Luke 17:20), when He solemnly affirmed that because His Kingdom was not of this world His servants could not fight for it (John 18:36). He was indeed a king, but not as Pilate nor the multitude understood it (John 6:15). His Kingdom, like His mission was not political. Its destination and final realization was other worldly and could not be accomplished by force of arms or by a union with the state. While in the world, He was utterly independent of the world, with different ideals and aims from those of the world, and therefore bound to come into collision with the world. With His disciples it was to be the same. Nowhere does that come more clearly to light than in the great prayer of intercession (John 17:9-16).

EQUALITY BETWEEN THE DISCIPLES

There was no hierarchy of discipleship. As in the case of Peter, a particular talent might bring leadership with it, but even that leadership lasted only so long as it was not spoiled by other faults of character. When the sons of Zebedee aspire to positions of special distinction they are met by a sharp rebuke that applies equally to the envious indignation of the rest of the

twelve (Matt. 20:25-28; Mark 10:42-45), and that is a renewal of a previous admonition, which had warned them that they were to seek to serve rather than to rule (Mark 9:33-35). Elsewhere they were instructed not even to strive for empty titles, like the Pharisees, but to realize that they were all brethren and equals (Matt. 23:8-11). How hard it was to learn that lesson is seen in the story of the feet washing—and in all the subsequent history of Christianity.

A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE DISCIPLES

It is easy, however, to draw a false conclusion from that equality. There is also a clear distinction drawn between the leaders and those who are led, the teachers and the taught; a distinction that came naturally with the increasing activity of the disciples and which the Lord recognized. There was a personal equality between them, but they were not all called to the same work. Some were to be commissioned for special service. The harvest of souls needed laborers to gather it (Matt. 9:37-38; Luke 10:2; John 4:35-38). The parables of the Great Supper (Luke 14:16-24) and of the Marriage of the King's Son (Matt. 22:2-10) both picture the servants who are called to do a special work in God's Kingdom; a work also implied in the command to ambitious disciples to become ministers. Out of the great number of hearers and the considerable number of disciples, who soon gathered around Him, the Lord chose certain ones to be leaders and commissioned them for certain purposes. The Apostles are informed that they are specially chosen (John 15:16). They are designated to be "fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19; Luke 5:10). They are sent out on a mission, like His

own, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt. 10:1, 5-8; Mark 3:13-15; 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-26). The same way the Seventy are sent on a special mission in which there is a distinction between them and those to whom they go (Luke 10:1-2). In either case the missionaries are the specially appointed representatives of Christ, who do not go of their own choice, nor clad simply with their own authority, but vested with something of the authority of the Lord, Who had delegated this work to them. The cities who refuse to hear them and the persons who will not receive them are both to be held accountable for their actions (Matt. 10:14-15; Mark 6:11; Luke 9:5; 10:5-12), while the messengers and preachers themselves are promised a special grace for their tasks (Matt. 10:19-20; Mark 13:11; Luke 12:11-12).

Not every one was at liberty to engage in such a mission. Mere willingness or a feeling of inner desire did not necessarily mean the acceptance of a volunteer. Like the prophets of old, the Lord's messengers were not to run unless they were sent. He appointed those whom He desired to send and chose whom He wished to have in His special company. When a grateful man, whom He has helped seeks to join that number, while he is evidently accepted as a disciple in the wider sense, and is to bear his private witness to what has been done for him, he is nevertheless refused a place among those selected for the more special and public work of the Kingdom (Mark 5:18-20; Luke 8:38-39).

THE COMMON DUTY OF ALL DISCIPLES TO KEEP THE TRUTH

Each individual had to guard against the danger of a false profession, that presented the appearance of a

real faith, without its inner reality, and all such simulated discipleship could only end in destruction (Matt. 7: 21-23). So the body of disciples, as a whole, would be threatened with a similar danger through the coming of false prophets, who might even perform lying wonders but who, because of their destruction of the truth, would involve themselves and their followers in utter ruin. False teaching, parading as Christ's teaching, is the great danger against which the body of disciples must guard (Matt. 7: 15-23; 24: 4-5, 23-24; Mark 13: 5-6, 21-22; Luke 21: 8).

II. THE FUTURE EXTENSION AND CONTINUATION OF THE MISSION OF CHRIST

The Catholicity and Perpetuity of Christ's Mission

Was the mission of Christ, in which they shared, only for Israel and the time of our Lord's earthly life? In the first place they had been expressly sent to Israel alone, just as the Lord Himself had limited His ministrations almost wholly to His own people. But there are intimations that the mission of Christ had a wider scope. He could heal a Roman centurion's servant and the daughter of a Canaanite. He warned proud and exclusive Jews that when those who were first bidden refused to come to the great supper others would take their place (Luke 14: 16-24), and in the parable of the marriage of the king's son a similar warning is repeated (Matt. 22: 2-10). In the end many of them would be thrust out while the scattered Gentiles would take their place (Matt. 8: 11-12; Luke 13: 28-29). Indeed it is expressly stated that the Kingdom of God is to be taken from them and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof (Matt. 21: 43). The final

Judgment itself would not take place till the Gospel was first "published among all nations" (Mark 13:10; Matt. 24:14). Privately similar assurances were given the disciples as when they are told that the anointing which took place in Simon's house is to be told to the whole world, because it is part of a Gospel that is to be universally preached (Matt. 26:13; Mark 14:9), and that repentance and forgiveness was to be preached among all nations (Luke 24:47).

But when was this to take place? Not during the Lord's earthly life. His work of redemption has to be completed and His rejection by the chosen people had to be final before it took place. From that time on till His final return in glory His mission was to reach out to the whole world. There is no need of citing particular passages from the Gospels. The entire apocalyptic element of His teaching points onward to that fact. The work of redemption was finished by Himself as that part of His mission could only be accomplished by Himself, but the actual bringing of that redemption to the world, the future extension of His mission was left to disciples commissioned for that task. *As the ministrants of His grace He identifies the mission of His disciples with His own.* In the future they were to bear witness concerning Him (John 15:27; Luke 24:48). While these two statements refer primarily to the first generation of Christians the whole apocalyptic teaching of the Gospels demands their extension to future generations. His authority was their authority (Luke 10:16), not only for that special mission but in an unbounded extension through time and place (Matt. 10:40; Mark 9:37; John 13:20; 17:18).

How expressly the Lord taught His disciples concerning the continuation of His mission after His de-

parture, and how they were to be given a special grace for that work, through the coming of the Holy Ghost and the wider revelation His coming would bring, becomes particularly clear in the last Gospel, where the temporal side of our Lord's mission fades more and more out of sight, even in the accounts of the most intimate personal scenes, and where the timeless and universal elements of the mission become more and more evident. The human circumstances become less important as the divine power that animates the disciples comes into the foreground.

Here, from a different viewpoint than the apocalyptic one, we hear of the continuation of the Lord's mission after His departure. There is a prediction that the attractive power of the Cross will reach out to all the world after His death (John 12:32), not because some mysterious force has been let loose but through their testimony (John 15:27). When the final intercession is made for them it includes a prayer for their support in carrying out their mission, and for those who shall believe through their word (John 17:18, 20), while the special direction of the Risen Lord to the first confessor is to carry on the work which has been begun—to feed the sheep (John 21:15-19).

This is a task too great for unaided humanity, so the Holy Ghost shall be their *perpetual* guide, comfort and strength. He shall provide them with the necessary ability (John 14:16-18, 26). Their witness will be made possible through the inner witness of the Holy Ghost (John 15:26-27). His assistance is even more necessary to them than the continued presence of Christ (John 16:7) and the illumination He will afford is to be complete and perfect as far as their records demand and God's eternal purpose decrees (John 16:13-15).

III. THE DEFINITE INSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF CARRYING ON CHRIST'S MISSION

Up to this point we have refrained from considering those statements of our Lord that deal directly with the Church. Our purpose was to show how the Church is a necessary and inevitable outgrowth of the Mission of Christ; that it was implied in all His earthly teaching and activity, and that it is the necessary factor for the completion of His mission on earth. If this be correct we would, of course, expect to find an unqualified declaration concerning the institution of the Church. We do not have to look far to find it.

THE ACTUAL INSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH

Faith in the one Lord, Who alone had the words of eternal life, had brought the Apostles together and united them into one company (John 6:68-69). Was that faith to be the bond of a permanent society of believers; an *Ecclesia*? When Peter, the spokesman, makes his great confession at Cæsarea Philippi, he becomes the rock on which the Lord declares the future Church is to be founded, since that Church was to be the gathering together of those who would profess this same confession. Not the man Peter, but the confessor, is the rock, for it cannot escape the attention of any thoughtful reader that almost immediately the man suffers the most stinging rebuke, when he is called Satan because of his ill chosen advice. And yet, as *confessing men* and not abstract theological propositions constitute the Church, there is a sense in which it is indeed founded on the first confessor, because he by his confession becomes the spiritual father of a regenerated race; the

Seth of that new race of which Christ was the second Adam.

Without losing ourselves in the question of the primacy of Peter, we must realize that the Lord here promises the institution of a Church of His followers against which no powers of evil can ever prevail. Its existence is assured and it is no mere "historical society" for the perpetuation of a certain tradition, but a society of believers, who will be hated and assailed by the powers of darkness as was the Lord, which is endowed with divine protection and which is to possess all that it was the Lord's mission to bring to men—the actual and real forgiveness of sins with the life and salvation that comes through that forgiveness. The atonement that the Lord brought to the world, the Church is to bring it in the future.

THE POWER OF THE KEYS GIVEN THE WHOLE CHURCH

How little basis there is for the claim of an individual primacy of Peter is apparent further on in the same Gospel of Matthew. There the power of binding and loosing is designated as a possession of the entire Church; given to the whole band of disciples, not simply to Peter (Matt. 18:17-18). Here the reason for that power is more fully explained. When those who are united by a common faith, that has united them with a common Lord, are gathered together, even though they be but two or three in number, they are assured of His presence among them with all the plenitude of His power (Matt. 18:19-20). Only it must be noted that there is something more here promised than is given to the individual in his mystical union with the Lord. This is a promise to the Church, not to specific indivi-

duals or to single believers as separated from the rest.

Furthermore it should be clearly noted that this is a spiritual and not a temporal power. It might involve discipline as far as the Church itself was concerned, but had nothing to do with the penalties of earthly law, the latter idea being expressly repudiated by the Lord later on (John 18:36). But one other fact is also very clear; that the Church which can be gathered in particular places and is to consider cases of disagreement between its individual members is both a visible and audible society, that can speak its decisions and that it is not a hidden *coetus praedestinatorum*. That it may include those who are not really a part of it is another matter that we must consider a little later.

For a third time the power of the keys is promised to the Church. This time it is the commission of the risen Lord (John 20:21-23), who again bestows the power of absolution on the Church. While there were others present besides the Eleven (Luke 24:33), and so the commission may be considered as addressed to the whole assembly, it is difficult not to see in it a double significance and to realize that it was intended particularly for the Apostles. Even though we would regard it as intended for all, what applies to the whole Church here applies particularly to its office bearers, its teachers and leaders, who are specially mentioned; so that we are surely doing no violence to the record if we see in it a particular commission to the ministry.

THE MEANS OF GRACE

In the giving of the power of the keys had been implied the certainty of God's promises and the efficacy of the ministration of His Word by men. Likewise the

disciples were to be witnesses to the truth and to continue the mission of Christ through the divine power of His Gospel (John 15:27), whose words were spirit and life (John 6:63, 68). This work of preaching a Gospel of forgiveness, which manifestly is intended to be an effectual forgiveness, is again repeated by the risen Lord (Luke 24:46-48).

To this Word the Lord adds another means of conveying His grace. Material elements are to come into play in connection with His promises and the Church is to continue His mission just as He had conducted it, by word and by touch. By the use of material elements men were to be assured of the reality of His grace. First in the Holy Supper a visible Sacrament had been provided which was to be a perpetual memorial of Christ, a continued means of actual participation in His presence, a channel of incorporation into Him, a vehicle for conveying the grace and forgiveness of His sacrifice to all believers, and that was so real that it brought His body and blood even to the unbelievers. An outward rite was to assure the actual gift of Himself, and this was to be repeated till He should return in glory, another pledge of the perpetuity of the Church. (Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:19-20).

The final climax of the Lord's earthly ministry and His final injunction to His Apostles is a solemn delegation of His Mission to the Church, together with the institution of that second Sacrament, that is directly to bestow the grace of regeneration to mankind (Matt. 28:19-20; [Mark 16:15-18]). So great is this work that lies before them that they were to receive divine support and they were not to begin it at once. They were reminded of the previous promises of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost and were reminded that they must await

this final act of Gods providential plan before the work of the Church can become fully effective (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-8).

CERTAIN OTHER CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH TAUGHT BY CHRIST

Before we take up this historic event, however, we must look for a moment at some characteristics of the Church that are mentioned more or less incidentally in the Lord's teaching or are found in some of the parables.

A SPIRITUAL ORGANISM

The Lord expressly repudiated the idea that He was to establish a political organization in the world. Not only did He refuse to act as a judge between contending litigants (Luke 12:13-14), and repelled the idea of an earthly kingship for Himself (John 6:15), but He expressly declared before Pilate that His kingdom was not of this world and that His servants would not fight for it (John 18:36), as, just before, He had warned Peter that His cause was not to be defended by the sword (Matt. 26:52-53; Luke 22:50-51; John 18:11-12).

The same fact had been unmistakably asserted in a previous declaration, when, in reply to the question of the Pharisees concerning the coming of the Kingdom, He stated that it would not come with outward show but that it was within (or among) them (Luke 17:20-21). Likewise the parables represent it as a seed growing secretly (Mark 4:26-29); a leaven that works unperceived (Matt. 13:33; Luke 13:20-21; a mustard seed, so insignificant that it passes unnoticed (Matt. 13:31-32; Mark 4:31-32; Luke 13:18-19). Yet, with all

this, it is always represented as becoming visible. The Lord has His disciples; the Kingdom gives evidence of its presence both within and among men; the seed brings forth its harvest; the leaven shows that it has permeated the whole lump, and the mustard seed develops into the largest of the herbs.

AN ORGANISM OF MIXED KIND

The Kingdom as men see it, in its earthly manifestation is not pure. Here good and evil, sincere men and hypocrites, tares and wheat are found more or less commingled (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43), good and bad are gathered in together (Matt. 13:47-49), sheep and goats are in the same company, often being classed as of one kind, till a future and final judgment shall separate them (Matt. 25:31-45). Even the chief laborers, the teachers, may belong to the impure elements that are finally to be cast out (Matt. 21:33-45; Mark 12:1-11; Luke 20:9-18). Nothing more strikingly illustrates this fact than the career of Judas among the Twelve. Not until the time has come for his judgment is he shut out from the grace shared by the rest. To the very end, even to the reception of the Holy Supper, he has an equal participation in God's grace and to the whole world he appears just like the others, even though the Lord was long before aware of his true character (John 6:70).

AN ORGANISM POSSESSING A DIVINE LIFE

The seed finds good soil and grows (Matt. 13:8; Mark 4:8; Luke 8:8), the leaven imparts its life to the whole lump (Matt. 13:33; Luke 13:21), and the feast is furnished with guests (Matt. 22:10; Luke 13:21).

In spite of all human admixture and impurity the divine forces of grace are effective. Even though teachers should disgrace their doctrine by their lives, the truths they teach still remain true and carry with them God's sanction and authority, for what God offers or commands is not vitiated by the faults of those who minister it (Matt. 23: 2-3).

II. THE ACTUAL EXTENSION OF THE MISSION OF CHRIST TO THE CHURCH

I. AS RELATED IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

The Significance of Pentecost

During the ten days following the Ascension it must almost have seemed as though the high hopes of Easter had all come to an end. The Lord's work of redemption was completed, the band of disciples had been fully instructed and commissioned, yet the Church stood still; it gained no converts, did no missionary work and only waited. True, the Lord's command was to await the coming of the Comforter, but it is evident that not only obedience but also an inner necessity caused the disciples to mark time. Something essential for their carrying on of the mission of Christ was still lacking. Only as the mission of Christ, which He had personally completed by the objective redemption, becomes the mission of the Comforter can it become the mission of the Church, for there cannot be a Church without the presence of the Holy Ghost. This final step in the progressive revelation of God to the world and the ministration of His redeeming love took place in an historic act, definitely marked as to the time and place of its occurrence. There was a special manifestation, seen and

heard by witnesses, that proved that it had taken place. The outward signs of Pentecost together with the inner power and grace that resulted in the conversion of the five thousand presented the historic evidence of the coming of a Divine Presence, apart from the evidence of the Presence manifested in all the subsequent life of the Church. As angelic songs and a visible Babe, lying in the arms of Mary, were evidence of the Incarnation and proof that the Word was made flesh, so here, by external signs and by the inner moving of men's hearts it was shown that the Spirit of the Lord had been given to the Church.

Men have frequently failed to grasp the full significance of this event in the economy of the Kingdom of God. The history of that Kingdom is a history of revelation, and revelation is a drawing near of God to men. First, as was pointed out before, God revealed Himself *to men*, then, in the Incarnation began the revelation of Himself *among men*, and finally, as He works a personal regeneration of men's lives, He reveals Himself *in men*. But all this is a cumulative revelation. The first step is not displaced by the second, which is its completing addition, but the two remain as a unit, which finds its final consummation in the third step. When God's grace works *in men*, which of necessity means a work by men, then a living Church comes into actual being, sustained and sanctioned by a Divine Power in its work of carrying on the redemptive mission of Christ. As the Lord's work was a work of holiness so the Church is to make men holy; a purpose that can only be accomplished by the presence of the Spirit of Holiness. The realization of that fact is clearly indicated not only by the historic events and by clear statements of the Apostles but also by their sud-

den and constant use of the terms the *Church* and the *Holy Ghost*.³ Henceforth the two factors that are recognized as realizing the Kingdom of God on earth are the Church and the Holy Ghost, but not as separate from each other. They belong together and are united by inextricable ties in the accomplishment of that purpose. The Holy Ghost chooses to work through the Church and the Church cannot work without the Holy Ghost.

THE DEPENDENCE OF THE CHURCH ON THE HOLY GHOST

From the very beginning the Apostles and the other believers associated with them had felt their dependence on divine guidance and assistance, not only as individuals but also as a company of the disciples of Christ. Besides the references to the Holy Ghost and His activity we find a tacit confession of their need in the prayers and supplications that were offered in common by the disciples. Before the Day of Pentecost (Acts 1:14); after the outpouring of the Holy Ghost (2:42); at a crisis like the imprisonment of Peter (12:5, 12), they are found praying for succor and guidance from above. There is no need for multiplying references as it is apparent to even the most cursory reader of the New Testament that the entire apostolic period of Christianity is punctuated by prayer. This heavenly aid is sought so instinctively because it is recognized as a present reality, as well as an unmistakable need. Peter not only regards the Holy Ghost as the giver of past revelation (1:16) but believes that the promises of His outpouring made in the past (2:

³ In the Book of Acts alone there are 51 unmistakable references to the Holy Ghost as against 44 such direct references in all four Gospels. The increased use of the word *ἐκκλησία* has already been noted.

17-18) are being realized in his own day (2:33), while Paul knows that even his missionary plans are regulated by a divine guidance of the Spirit (16:6).

THE CATHOLIC MISSION OF THE CHURCH

It was the consciousness of the actual presence of God's Spirit that impelled the disciples to undertake the task that had been assigned them—to carry out the redemptive mission of Christ to the whole world. This was the mission before them at the time the book of Acts begins its story (1:5-8), and the realization of this coming task moves Peter to propose the appointment of another Apostle in the place of Judas, that he may help in carrying on the witness to the resurrection of Christ. Then comes Pentecost and puts the whole body of believers into motion; a static group of disciples becomes a missionary Church. The currents that had brought men to Jerusalem for Pentecost were from all corners of the world and the returning tide would bear back with it messengers of the Gospel to every quarter. Their message would be no longer solely for the Jews but for all men, as Peter expressly told them that it would also apply to those afar off (2:39). Philip, Peter and John preach in Samaria and Philip baptizes an Ethiopian (Ch. 8). Peter ventures at last to baptize a Roman and the brethren approve his action (Ch. 10-11). Paul turns to the Gentiles (13:42-48), and sets out on his missionary journeys. But what need of citing special instances when the whole book is an account of the extension of the Gospel to the whole world, and a proof of the fact that the Church is not limited to one place or one nation. A real catholicity preaches the universal Gospel, in the universal Church, to all mankind.

THE CHURCH ENDOWED WITH DIVINE POWERS

The Book of Acts is a miracle Book. Its pages are crowded with accounts of miracles and with references to signs and wonders, not only of grace but also of physical power, that gave evidence to the world of the presence of a divine Power (2:43; 3:6-8; 4:30-31; 5:12, 16; 6:8; 8:6-7, 15-17; 9:40; 12:7-10; 14:3, 10; 15:12; 16:18; 19:6, 11; 20:10-12; 28:5, 8). But these special manifestations are always subordinated to the greatest consideration of all, which ever remains the impartation of the divine life of the Gospel, the giving of the Spirit of God through the means by which He brings the salvation of Christ to the individual. Miracles, as such, are only side issues compared with the Word and Sacraments. Their chief value consists in giving to the outside world an evidence of the presence of the Divine Life in the Church. The great thing was not such external evidence but the impartation of that divine life to the individual believer.*

*The miraculous element in Acts is always kept in proper subordination even when it is so prominent. There is never the undue exaltation of physical miracles found in Rome and many modern sects. They are only like the sonorous bells of a church tower, calling men to the enjoyment of the grace found within the sanctuary. When men have once entered the sanctuary it is no longer necessary for the clangor of the bells to call them. That the spiritual miracles of regeneration are still accompanied by signs and wonders no one will dispute. A striking example of the modern appreciation of that fact is given in the life of von Bodelschwingh as told by his son: "The old saying *πραξις ἐπιβασις θεωρίας* (the deed gives access to certainty) here repeatedly became a true saying. In the active help he was able to give more than one candidate forgot his subtle intellectual broodings. In the common life he shared with many Brothers and Sisters of the Deacon's and Deaconess' Homes he observed that Jesus Christ was the great power of the world, from Whom flow energies and transformations that could not be accomplished by any human might, and as he saw the childlike faith of a half-witted boy of Zoar or of an epileptic farmer of Hebron he experienced something that surpassed all the university period had offered." *Friederich von Bodelschwingh, Leben und Lebenswerk dargestellt von seinem Sohne*, Berlin, 1923, p. 295.

THE CHURCH AN INSTITUTION OF SALVATION

In the Church are the channels through which God's grace and power are communicated to the individual, and in the account of the origins of the Church, found in Acts, the preaching of the Word and Baptism are continually noted as the outstanding factors for the impartation of eternal life to those who believed. If this is a miracle book it is far more a preaching book. Sermon after sermon is recorded together with the results it produced in the hearers. Everywhere the success attending the preaching of the Word shows what power there is in the "word of his grace" (20:32). But there is also a special grace given in baptism. Peter demands that his hearers be baptized for the remission of sins (2:38); Paul needs baptism as well as the heavenly vision (9:18); those who have been granted a special gift of the Holy Ghost through Peter's preaching still require it (10:44-48); faith leads Lydia to it (16:14-15), likewise the jailor at Philippi (16:32-33), and the converts at Corinth (19:5).

Because of the character of Acts and its manifest intention to be primarily an account of the missionary operations of the Church the Holy Supper is mentioned only casually, but it is there, and the whole picture of the Church that is given us is that of an institution of salvation, not a mere association of believers, and one moreover that possesses a divine grace, ministered to men through fixed and appointed channels, which actually convey the grace they offer. The Church is described as a real and effective continuation of the redemptive mission of Christ.

This grace is ministered by the Church, it is found in the Church and of necessity the believers receiving it

belong to the Church. In a startling statement Luke makes that fact very clear: "The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved" (2:47). It was because Christ was in His Church, and outside Him there is no salvation (3:23; 4:12; 13:48). As surely as the New Testament knows no salvation outside of Christ, so surely it never hints at the thought of a salvation apart from Christ's Church. As the Lord did not recognize disciples who refused to confess Him, so the Apostles do not even dream of salvation apart from the channels of grace flowing through the Church. As we shall presently see, this did not mean some particular form of organization or some special kind of polity, but it did mean the Church, which is the congregation of saints, and which ministers the means of grace. That very expression, "Added to the Church daily such as should be saved" and the whole missionary zeal manifested by the Apostles and their converts shows that back of all their activity lay the thought, whether clearly grasped or only present as an undeveloped feeling, "*Extra ecclesiam nulla salus.*"

THE CHURCH VISIBLE

The number of the elect is indeed invisible to human eyes and mortal vision cannot see the Holy Ghost, but as the invisible grace of Word and Sacraments was manifested by means that were audible and tangible, so the Church, though invisible in its essence, was nevertheless a perceptible society that showed itself to the world by its confession, its words and its deeds, a membership that could even, on occasion, be numbered (2:41-42; 4:4; 5:11; 5:14; 6:7; 9:31; 11:21, 26; 12:1; 13:1). Not one of these passages would have any

meaning if the Church were truly and completely invisible. They imply that the Church is perceptible by men in the world.

ENTRANCE INTO THE CHURCH CONDITIONAL ON CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS

As the Lord had required of those whom He called faith in Himself, the confession of His name, and a certain separation from the world, that all was followed by a certain mystical union with Himself, we find repentance, faith and baptism the required conditions of participation in salvation and of union with the Church. (2:38; 3:19; 8:36-37; 16:31; 18:8; 19:18). Here we see the call through the Word and the regenerating grace of Holy Baptism. In one form or another the objective, visible means of grace have to be first operative. Then the acceptance of that grace by the repentant and believing hearer, who attests his conversion by his professions and actions, which in the case of those called through the preaching of the Gospel means also the submission to baptism before they are fully a part of the Church of Christ. Even as extraordinary a case as the conversion of Paul is no exception to God's regular order. Though it be a voice from heaven and God Himself Who proclaims the great fact of the Gospel to him, and though the manner of its preaching be so unusual it does not relieve him from the necessity of receiving the grace of baptism. Indeed he is expressly instructed to receive its grace and the visible evidence of his call into God's Kingdom from the hands of a humble member of the Church (9:17-18). The disciples at Jerusalem might naturally be suspicious of him, but the evidence of his reception into the Church and his

bold confession of Christ was sufficient for them and they received him as a brother (9:26-28). At a later date Paul himself insists on similar conditions of admission to the Church (22:16).

THE CHURCH HAS AUTHORITATIVELY APPOINTED TEACHERS

As soon as the company of believers begins to appear in the narrative as a clearly articulated organization it has its teachers and leaders, who speak with authority. At first we hear simply of the Apostles, who look on their mission chiefly as that of being witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, so that Matthias must be elected to take the vacant place of Judas (1:22; 2:32; 3:15), but that idea quickly expands into the wider conception of a preaching of the Gospel, that is not only a witnessing of the historic fact of the Resurrection but also includes the whole counsel of God. This duty of witnessing lies upon them as the result of an inner necessity as well as through an external command (4:20; 5:31. This passage is particularly interesting as it binds together their preaching with the inner testimony of the Holy Ghost in the heart of the believer. 5:20-25, 32, 41-42; 10:39). Moved by a similar impulse Paul begins to preach immediately after his entrance into the Church through baptism (9:20) and his whole career as a missionary is one grand witnessing to the Gospel of Christ (14:7; 15:35; 17:3; 20:24), while the very last words of the book picture him as engaged in this activity (28:31).

This witnessing was not limited to the Apostles. Not only in private but even in public the deacons and other believers preached Christ (8:4; 11:19-21; 15:35). So in other matters pertaining to the welfare of the Church

there was a general participation of all the disciples. When Matthias was chosen the whole congregation took part in the transaction (1:15, 23). The deacons were elected by a general gathering of believers (6:2-6). Peter's course in going to Cornelius was approved by the whole assembly (11:1-18), while, most significant of all, the decree of the first council in Jerusalem was made not only by Apostles and Elders but "with the whole church" (15:22-29). So the work of the Church pertained to all believers, but not in the same way to all. While there is no hint anywhere of a sacerdotal order the same distinction between teachers and taught, that was recognized by our Lord, is evident, and the office of the ministry, as He instituted it, comes more and more clearly into view.

Strange indeed is the attempt to deduce from the silence of Acts concerning the divine institution of the ministry the conclusion that it was only developed naturally from local circumstances and was merely a gradual result of local necessities. Even K stlin attempts to do so.⁶ By the same kind of reasoning the Lord's Supper about which almost nothing is said, and the Sacrament of Baptism, which is mentioned so often but without reference to its divine institution, might both be regarded as developments from former customs or as devices introduced, under apostolic supervision, to meet special needs. That is misreading facts in the interest of theories. The natural conclusion is the very opposite. The writer of the Acts is careful to record what is new in the experience of the disciples. The outpouring and continued activity of the Holy Ghost, both in miracles and in men's hearts, the institution and or-

⁶ Julius K stlin, *Das Wesen der Kirche*, etc. 2d ed. 1872, pp. 77-78, 106.

ganization of the diaconate, the turning of the Apostles to the Gentiles, and the official recognition of the passing away of the obligations of the Mosaic Law are all related, while those things already clearly commanded by the Lord or learned directly from Him by the Apostles, during the time of His earthly ministry, are all taken as a matter of course; they appear as established facts. The office of the ministry is one of these. All attempts to read out of the New Testament the divine institution of an office of the Ministry are just as forced and artificial as the attempts to read into it the beginnings of a sacerdotal system, or to find there the foundations of a priestly hierarchy.

The conception of a special office of the ministry is taken for granted as an historic fact in the Book of Acts. The Twelve desired the creation of a diaconate that they might give themselves wholly to their peculiar work, "to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (6:2-4). The elders appear as the official heads of the congregation at Jerusalem to whom Barnabas and Paul are sent (11:30). In Antioch five men are specially mentioned as prophets and teachers, who ministered to the Lord (13:1). The Apostles and elders at Jerusalem were distinguished from the rest of the Church (15:4), and the same office is found elsewhere, for Paul on his final journey to Jerusalem calls the elders of the Church at Ephesus to meet him at Miletus (20:17).

Other offices might be instituted to meet special needs, as in the case of the diaconate, but there the incumbents are not represented as doing the regular work of the ministry. Stephen did great wonders and testified to his faith (ch. 7), but he did not act in the pastoral capacity of the Apostles and elders. Philip preached as

a missionary, baptized and evangelized, as did other private Christians on occasion (8:5-40), but he does not appear as the settled pastor of a regular congregation. His work is an extraordinary one.

That the ministry is the highest office in the Church is also evidently taken for granted, because while the ten deacons were elected by the whole multitude, they were presented to the Apostles for their approval and the latter confirmed the election by the laying on of their hands (6:5-6). Paul and Barnabas were officially set apart for their missionary work by the prophets and teachers of Antioch (13:2-3), while on their travels through Derbe, Lystra and Iconium, Paul and Barnabas by their own authority appointed the elders in every church (14:23). In this case the *appointment* of the elders is an outstanding fact. Whether they were first chosen by the congregations is a question passed over in silence but that they were appointed by the visiting ministry, the missionaries, is expressly recorded. More than once those in the office of the ministry showed their consciousness of a divine calling and of an authority that imposed on them the necessity of challenging any authority that might conflict with it. Peter and John defied those who attempted to silence them and so would have interfered with their commission to preach the Gospel (4:18-20), and a second time Peter and the Apostles repeated the defiance (5:29). In the council at Jerusalem all alike take part in the decision, but the Apostles and elders are the leaders of the deliberations, the spokesmen and those who presided (ch. 15), while later on a practical application of its decisions is made by James and the elders (21:18-25). Most clear of all is the statement made by Paul to the elders at Ephesus that they are overseers, who are to feed the

Church and that they have been appointed over the flock by the Holy Ghost (20:28).

THE CHURCH POSSESSES A REAL UNITY OF FAITH

About the unity of the Church as portrayed in Acts there is no question. In its first stages it even had a common possession of earthly goods. That proved to be only a short lived experiment, but it served well its purpose of showing that real unity was grounded on a spiritual bond and that it was grounded on a deeper principle than any external agreements. The great bond of union in the Church was the unity of faith. Even that first experiment in common possession sprang from a desire to give complete expression to the inner unity of all believers (2:42-46; 4:32-35). It caused those who were at Antioch to feel that they were one with those in Jerusalem and in duty bound to assist them in time of need (11:29-30). Nowhere, however, is there any hint that this unity, which caused them constantly to refer to each other as brethren and made them consult with each other on the vital issues that involved the interests of all, rested on their connection with the Apostles, let alone their relation to Peter. It is their common faith in Christ, their relation to Him that makes them one. In the warning against false teachers and false doctrine, given by St. Paul to the elders at Ephesus (20:29-30), which is a distinct repetition of the Lord's warning against false prophets, it is stated that these teachers would draw men away by their perverse teachings. False doctrine would disturb the unity of the Church because it would cloud the clearness of their faith and so weaken, if not perhaps destroy, their relation to Christ. In its common faith and its catholic

confession of Christ the Church was one because thus every part of the Church was united by the same bond to the One Lord, the one great Shepherd of the sheep.

BUT IN THE ONE CHURCH THERE IS STILL AN ADMIXTURE
OF EVIL

All too soon the significance of the Lord's parables of the tares and the wheat, etc., became evident. The outward connection with the Church did not guarantee the reality of the individual's conversion nor the sincerity of his faith. Men might be in the Church but not of the Church. Not only did human frailty manifest itself in those who were real disciples (6:1; 15:1-2, 37-40), but some who appeared to be especially enthusiastic disciples turned out to be frauds who had no real part in the Church of which they were outwardly recognized as members. The tragic story of Ananias and Sapphira (5:1-10) is a continual reminder of the certain presence of dross among the gold. It almost seems as though special insight into their hearts had been given to Peter for the express purpose of warning all future generations that no merely external bond could make real Christians out of men. Though salvation was to be found only in the Church, simply to have an external connection with that Church did not bring salvation, nor was it any assurance of salvation by itself, either to the individual or to the world.

II. THE APOSTOLIC COMMENTS AND EXPLANATIONS CONCERN- ING THE EXTENSION OF THE MISSION OF CHRIST TO THE CHURCH FOUND IN THE REMAINDER OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The apostolic writings do not add anything additional to the fundamental accounts of the Church contained in

the Gospels and Acts, but they furnish the comments and explanations and practical directions concerning what is an accomplished fact. Now while they add nothing essentially new they certainly clarify and establish all that has gone before. Here we see how the nature of the Church is disclosed more fully as a result of its conflict with the world and the powers of darkness.

THE CHURCH IS HOLY

Here we read about a divine institution whose members are called to holiness; the saints, or those called to be saints is the startling phrase we find used (Rom. 1:7; 8:27; 15:25-26, 31; 16:1-2, 15; I Cor. 1:2; 6:1-2; 14:33; 16:1, 15; II Cor. 1:1; 8:4; 9:12; 13:13; Eph. 1:1; 15, 18; 2:19; 3:8, 18; 4:12; 5:3; 6:18; Phil. 1:1; 4:21-22; Col. 1:2; 4:12, 26; I Thess. 3:13; 5:27; II Thess 1:10; Philemon 5, 7; Heb. 3:1; 6:10; 13:24; I Peter 1:15-16). These even though not yet perfect are called to separate themselves from the evil in the world (II Cor. 6:14-17; Eph. 4:17-24; 5:25-32; Col. 3:2-11; II Tim. 2:19). In fact every ethical admonition found in the Epistles is a statement of the ideal holiness of the Church. But this holiness evidently does not lie in the perfect lives of believers. There would be no need of admonition if it did. It is the work of the Holy Ghost and whatever holiness is manifest among the believers is of His giving, while apart from Him there is no holiness (Rom. 5:5; 8:16, 23, 26-27; 9:1; I Cor. 3:5-7; Eph. 2:18-22; 3:5-6; I Thess. 1:5-6; II Thess. 2:13). The whole apostolic literature is simply saturated with the thought of the absolute dependence of the Church on the Holy Ghost. Without the operation of the Spirit of God there would be no Church.

THE CHURCH IS CATHOLIC

As the Church is God's work and His work includes the whole human race, so the Church is not limited to one nation or to particular individuals who might imagine themselves as particularly worthy for membership. As unbounded as is the atonement so unlimited is the Church. It was particularly Paul who realized that fact, as it was his particular share in the work of the Kingdom of God to clarify and demonstrate that truth. A Jew of the Jews he insisted that the Gentiles in the Church were fully the equals of the chosen people, because the Church is as catholic as the mission of Christ. Incidentally this forever precludes the idea of a preparation for grace that would make a nation or an individual particularly worthy of receiving grace (Rom. 1:5; 3:29; 9:24; II Cor. 12:13; Gal. Ch. 2; 3:28; Eph. 3:5-6; Col. 3:11; I Tim. 3:16; II Tim. 1:11). Nor is that knowledge limited to the Epistles of St. Paul. John in the Revelation sees an innumerable multitude of those gathered from all nations, who have been brought into the Church and share in her final perfection (Rev. 7:9).

THE CHURCH POSSESSES THE MEANS OF GRACE

The way in which the Holy Ghost reaches the nations and individuals is very simple. He is active in the work of the Church through the instruments selected for His communication, and these are the same exactly as those given by the commandment of Christ.

The chief means is the preaching of the Gospel. Neither an empty sound nor a merely human argument it is looked upon by the writers of the Epistles as a channel of salvation for all who do not resist it. It is

not merely a statement of facts but the means for communicating the power and grace of God. The Spirit of God is effectively with the Word (Rom. 1:16; 10:17; I Cor. 1:18-21; 2:3-5; 4:15; Gal. 3:2; Eph. 1:13; I Thess. 2:13; II Thess. 2:13-14; II Tim. 1:10; 3:14-17; Titus 1:2-3; Heb. 4:12; Jas. 1:18; I Peter 1:23-25; II Peter 1:19-21).

The references to the Sacraments are not so frequent but there is no question about them. They were taken for granted as a part of the Christian's life. Where baptism is mentioned it is regarded as an actual means of union with Christ and His redemptive work and as a real channel of saving grace (Rom. 6:4; Gal. 3:27; Eph. 5:26; Col. 2:12; Titus 3:5-7; I Peter 3:21).

Likewise the Lord's Supper is regarded by Paul as a great and solemn reality that is regularly to be observed by the congregation with the greatest reverence and with a realization of the greatness of the gift it conveys, a realization that is enforced by a declaration of the condemnation that must come to those who despise or disregard the presence of the Lord's body and blood. Here a divine gift is given and a dire penalty awaits those who treat it lightly (I. Cor. 10:16-21; 11:20, 23-29).

THE CHURCH HAS A VISIBLE ORGANIZATION

Here we have been dealing with realities. An unseen grace has been communicated by visible and audible means which have been ministered by men to their fellow men, in actual gatherings in various localities. The Church is no Platonic dream but an institution whose presence is perfectly evident to the world. Not only is it to administer discipline (the Corinthians, for ex-

ample), but it was disgraced by public dissensions on occasion (I. Cor. 11:16-18), it was called on to decide questions in dispute (I. Cor. 6:4) and it needed to be ruled, controlled, directed (II Cor. 11:28; I Tim. 3:5; III John 9-10). It has a tangible membership and perceptible activities (Rom. 16:1, 23; I Cor. 12:28; 14:4 seq.; II Cor. 1:11; 8:18-19, 23-24; James 5:14). It makes money contributions (I Cor. 7:17; II Cor. 11:8; Phil. 4:15; I Tim. 5:16). It is a victim of persecution (I Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13; Phil. 3:16). It is found in certain localities, even in the homes of particular believers (Rom. 16:5; I Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Philemon 2). It is located at Corinth (I Cor. 1:2), in Galatia (I Cor. 16:1; Gal. 1:2), in Asia (I Cor. 16:19), in Macedonia (II Cor. 8:1), in Judea (Gal. 1:22), in Laodicea (Col. 4:16), among the Thessalonians (I Thess. 1:1; II Thess. 1:1), among the Gentiles (Rom. 16:4), at Cenchrea (Rom. 16:1), at Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos Thyatira Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea (Rev. chs. 2 and 3).

As to conditions for membership little is said, for a very good reason. The whole epistolary literature is addressed to baptized believers and takes it for granted that they have faith in Christ and have been baptized.

THE CHURCH IS ORGANIZED WITH AN OFFICIAL MINISTRY

The Church is already an organized society with a number of offices but of these one stands out very distinctly as the pre-eminent office of the Church—the ministry. The Twelve were originally pastors of the Church, as well as men who had the peculiar mission of being witnesses to Christ and His resurrection because they had known Him during His earthly life. Soon,

however, the term Apostle itself is broadened so as to include others besides the Twelve. Not only Paul but Barnabas is so called (I Cor. 9: 5-6, as previously in Acts 14:14), while Andronicus and Junia (Rom. 16:7), Timothy (II Cor. 1:1; Col. 1:1) and James the brother of the Lord (Gal. 1:19) are placed on an equal footing with them on occasion. Of course the exact interpretation of some of these passages, particularly Rom. 16:7, is open to grave question but at the very least the association of Timothy with Paul in some salutations shows that between their respective offices there was no such great gulf. Gradually the apostolate seems to be shading over into the office of the elders who locally take the place of the Apostles. So much so that Peter, who refers to himself at the opening of his Epistle as an Apostle of Jesus Christ, towards the end speaks of himself as an elder addressing fellow elders (I Peter 5:1). That the latter office is generally established at a very early date is quite clear from the fact that it is already mentioned, as an established institution, in the Epistle of James (5:14).

By whatever term it was called, apostolate, presbyterate or episcopate, and whether these offices are the same or can be differentiated, one fact always holds good, that their authority is derived from God Who has instituted them and not from the congregations to whom they minister. No one insists on this more strenuously than Paul (Rom. 1:1-5; I Cor. 12:28-30; Gal. 1:1; Eph. 3:7; 4:11-12; Col. 1:23, 25; 4:17; I Tim. 1:1, 11-12; 2:7; II Tim. 1:1, 11; Titus 1:3). He asserts that authority in many ways even to the extent of decreeing that one-half of the congregation, the women are ineligible for that office (I Cor. 14:34-35; I Tim. 2:12), though there is no doubt about their sharing in

all the rights of the spiritual priesthood of believers.

The ministry, by virtue of their office, are stewards of the mysteries of God (I Cor. 4:1), who administer God's grace (II Cor. 8:19) and who forgive sins in the person of Christ (II Cor. 2:10). To them is committed the ministry of reconciliation and they are the very ambassadors of Christ (II Cor. 5:18-20), or, as Paul once puts it ambassadors of the Gospel (Eph. 6:19-20). He admonishes Titus to exercise authority (Titus 2:15), while the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews exhorts the congregations to respect the authority of their pastors (Heb. 13:7, 17). Those who fill this office are not hirelings of the congregation, though entitled to remuneration and support (I Cor. 9:11-14), but they are the spiritual fathers of their flocks (I Cor. 4:15) and come to them as God's co-workers (I Cor. 3:9; II Cor. 6:1). Special qualifications are needed and special endowments are given to those who are called to fill this office (I. Tim. 3:1-13; 4:12-16; Titus 1:5—2:15). If anyone cannot find the divine institution of the office of the ministry in the New Testament it is simply because he does not want to see what is there.

ORDINATION

One thing remains to be considered; the method by which men are inducted into the office of the ministry. No definite method is prescribed but the notices recorded; all tell the same tale. Timothy is reminded that he has been given a special charism by the laying on of the hands of Paul and of the presbytery and through prayer (II Tim. 1:6; I Tim. 4:14). Apparently this was the form of his commissioning. In commissioning others Timothy is not to ordain them into the holy office

out due consideration (I Tim. 5:22), but it is his duty to find fitting men to whom he can commit the faith and who will be able to teach it to others (II Tim. 2:2). Similarly Titus is directed to "Ordain elders in every city" (Titus 1:5). So the ministry provides for successors who will carry on the work of teaching. Their examination and training is to be cared for by those already in that office.

THE SPIRITUAL PRIESTHOOD

Only it must be observed that there is no hint anywhere that a mysterious, magic gift is thus transmitted. Only the charism needed for their work is assured them, just as God always provides the needed grace for any work He assigns to men. This fact does not constitute a sacerdotal order. All believers are clearly constituted kings and priests before God. No levitical priesthood is needed to establish the communion of the individual soul with God (I Peter 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6), but the public preaching of the Word, the care of souls, the ordinary ministration of the Sacraments and the guidance and teaching of the Church is provided for by God through the office He has instituted; the office to which is ordinarily committed the means of grace in which the Holy Ghost is operative. This office by virtue of divine institution derives its authority from God, not by delegation from the congregation. It ministers a divine grace through the appointed means but this grace is supplied by the Holy Ghost and not through the personal endowments of the minister.

THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH

The thought of a mystical union between the believer and Christ occurs again and again, and united with it

the idea of a resulting fellowship between the members of the Church who are bound together as they are united by faith to the one Lord. Paul loves to use the figure of the Body of Christ as a description of the Church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18, 24), the believers being parts of that body, members of His flesh and of His bones (Eph. 5:30). As a result of that intimate union with the Lord their hearts must also be knit together in love (Col. 2:2). Again he sees this union typified by the union between man and wife (Eph. 5:25-32). Nothing is so abhorrent to him as the thought of a schism between believers and his Epistles to the Corinthians are a vigorous protest against such divisions. He knows of only one Church and that one Church is to be a unity. John loves to repeat the same thought under a different figure. He speaks of it as a being in Christ, a fellowship that also unites those who realize it to each other (I John 1:3, 7).

But this fellowship is not merely an indefinite relationship of good will and mutual affection. As it is a real union that springs from faith in the same Lord and union with the same head it must be the expression of the one faith. There is a true unity of the Church that results from a common faith and that must find expression in a common doctrine and a united confession of one teaching. The New Testament knows only of one God, one Baptism, one Church, one faith, one doctrine of Jesus Christ. Never is there any hint that men have a right to "agree to disagree" concerning that faith, and still less any idea that real believers should want to do so. Liberalism is the favorite idol of the age of the Illumination, but it is totally foreign to the New Testament. There, as we shall presently see, we find what our age likes to slander as bigotry.

In this great fellowship of those united to Christ there is then an essential unity of faith; not simply of a subjective trust but of an objective teaching, a common dogma. The common communion of believers with Christ is a sign of their own inner unity with each other (I Cor. 10:17). In his great hymn of the Church, the Epistle to the Ephesians, Paul deduces this unity as a necessary consequence of the unity of God, of revelation and of the means of grace (Eph. 4:1-6). The faith of the Gospel must produce one spirit and one mind (Phil. 1:27). So wonderful is this fellowship of faith in Christ that in the Epistle to the Hebrews the perfected saints are still regarded as being in the membership of the Church, and those yet living are in fellowship with them (Heb. 12:22-23). In this unity of faith there is indeed a wonderful diversity of operations, a wide difference of talents, but that cannot disturb the inner bond of a common faith and doctrine that unites them in the mystical body of Christ (Rom. 12:4-5; I Cor. 12:4-27). Only in this faith there must be no wavering from the common confession (Heb. 13:9; Col. 1:23).

The apostolic writers do not shrink from the thought of this bond involving a common creed, and with great vehemence denounce those who would corrupt the doctrine they have delivered to the Church. They warn against any departure from the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3). Even a creed, a *form* of sound words is insisted on (II Tim. 1:13; Titus 1:9), and any false teacher who departs from the Gospel as it has been preached is to be shunned (Rom. 16:17; I Cor. 1:10-13; II Cor. 11:3-4; I Tim. 6:3-5, 20-21). The heretic who persisted after repeated admonition was to be rejected (Titus 3:9-11). This rule knows no excep-

tion for Paul himself, even an angel from heaven was to be accounted accursed should either attempt to preach any other Gospel (Gal. 1:8). Every congregation must be ready thus to discriminate between true and false teachers, rejecting those who err (Rev. 2:2, 9, 14-15). Indeed John, the Apostle of love, is so bitter that he would not have believers receive such teachers into their houses nor bid them God speed (II John 8-11). This is something more than a return of the fiery and ill-advised zeal of the Son of Zebedee before the Samaritan village; it is a feeling, shared by all the Apostles alike, in so far as their utterances are recorded, that false teaching is destructive both for the teacher and for the Church. Those guilty of grave moral transgressions were to be sought out, if still they might be saved, but the persistent false teacher was to be put out. There was no place for him in the Church, he was disrupting its very bond of union, and by obscuring the truth concerning Christ was imperiling the relation of the soul to Christ. This feeling is clearly expressed in Second Peter, where we read of damnable heresies which bring swift destruction to those who hold them (II Peter 2:1-2) and also of a wresting of the Scriptures that produces a similar result (II Peter 3:16).

AN ADMIXTURE OF EVIL IS STILL FOUND IN THE CHURCH

Even when holding most firmly to the truth the Church is still imperfect and has unworthy members in her midst. Like the individual the Church is warring with sin within as well as in the world without. Her holiness is not a stainless perfection of Her membership. Paul might address the Corinthians as saints, but the Epistle itself makes it very clear that not all

of that congregation were saintly in their lives. He complains about what he has suffered from false brethren in various places and John refers to similar conditions (I John 2:19). More than one Epistle has its census of wrong doers within the Church, and the repeated exhortations to virtue are a convincing testimony that the Apostolic Church was no Donatistic Society, nor a band of Pharisees dreaming about their own perfections, but a community of believers who were being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. The sinner was accounted righteous before God, through faith, but his final sanctification, as also that of the Church, was a process that continues till a final consummation (Eph. 5:26-27).

III. THE SYSTEMATIC STATEMENT OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

The task remains of gathering together the statements of the Lord, as understood through the early history of the Church and the comments of the Apostles, into a systematic statement.

I. WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

Augustine, who largely understood the Kingdom of God, like most of the Fathers, in an eschatological sense, also perceived its present significance. In the *De Civitate Dei* (XX, ch. 9, he says: "*Ecclesia et nunc est regnum Christi, regnumque Caelorum.*" The Church is the present manifestation of the Kingdom of God, the continuation of the mission of Christ, the institution founded for conveying to men His redemption, the place of His special presence, the assembly of believers, the communion of saints in which the Holy Ghost mediates

that redemption by His grace. The Church is the assurance of the nearness of God and His grace. There we find Him. There is no longer need for a quest of the Holy Grail, nor a pilgrimage to distant shrines or holy places afar off. Where the Church is, there God is, manifested in the flesh, through Word and Sacraments. We might call the Church the *Transeunt Organon* of the Kingdom of God. This is indeed a barbarous terminology but it will serve to keep in mind the twofold character of the Church, which is truly *transeunt*, in the sense in which Frank used that word. It is both spiritual and material, heavenly and earthly, a matter of experience and an object of faith, a divine creation and an earthly association.

Perhaps we can just as well describe that twofold character by the classic definition of the Church as the Communion of Saints,* if we are careful to remember that this communion has been established and is only made possible through the activity of the Holy Ghost, while on the other hand the Communion of Saints by ministering the grace of the Holy Ghost becomes truly the mother of those who are brought into the fellowship of faith. The Communion of Saints is a necessary consequence of true discipleship. Men cannot be disciples of Christ, united to Him by the bond of faith, without being united to each other. The supreme realization of the believer's union with Christ comes in the Holy Supper, yet Paul very specifically reminds the Corinthians that this action also establishes a bond of fellowship between those who partake of it. The Lord's

* The view that the "Communion of Saints" in the Creed is only a definition or description of the Church is far older than Luther, though he gave it the widest currency, through the Smalkald Articles. Nicetas of Remisciana about 400 A. D. explains the Church as the "communion with all the saints."

Prayer, with its plural intercessions and petitions for the coming of God's Kingdom, is only realized in the Church. By a very inner necessity we are a part of the Church if we have a part in Christ. 'And furthermore as that grace that has caused our faith is ministered by the Church, the Church is truly our mother and without her we do not have God for our Father.' This being the case the old aphorism, *Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*, which so often sounds harsh and unpleasant to modern ears is only the correct statement of an inevitable fact, a necessary logical consequence of the whole teaching of the Lord. Scripture knows of no Christianity apart from the Church, and so we will have to say with Luther: "Wer Christum finden soll, der muss die Kirchen am ersten finden. Wie wollt man wissen, wo Christus wäre und sein Glaube, wenn man nicht wüsste, wo seine Gläubigen sind? Und wer etwas von Christo wissen will, der muss nicht ihm selbs trauen, noch eine eigene Brück in den Himmel bauen durch sein eigen Vernunft, sondern zu der Kirchen gehen, dieselbige besuchen und fragen . . . Denn ausser der christlichen Kirchen ist keine Wahrheit, kein Christus, keine Seligkeit." Kirchenpostilla, Ev. am II Christag. (Er. ed. 10, p. 170 seq.).

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE "ECCLESIA PROPRIE DICTA"
AND THE "ECCLESIA LARGE DICTA"

But what manner of Church is meant, a visible organization or a purely spiritual and invisible fellow-

^r As Musaeus has well put it: "Ecclesia enim non solum fidelium congregatio est, sed etiam mater eorum, Esa. 54: 1, Gal. 4: 26, quae ex semine Verbi et Sacramento baptismi spirituales filios et filias concipit et parit, natosque spirituali cibo educat et ad aeternam salutem tandem perducit." *Tractatus De Ecclesia*, 1675, part II, p. 16.

ship? That opens at once a question that has been the topic of innumerable controversies, many of which might have been avoided if the use of the terms visible and invisible Church had never crept into common use. Far better is the distinction made in the Apology for the Augsburg Confession where there is a discrimination between the Church *large dicta* and *proprie dicta*. These are still the most satisfactory terms to describe the difference between the Church in its appearance and its essential reality. The New Testament knows of only one Church, yet in that one Church as men see it not all are true believers and real Christians. There is dross with the gold, tares with the wheat and a Judas among the Twelve. The distinction between these two classes, however, is not one of relative perfection. The very best remain imperfect and Paul expressly states that he has not yet attained perfection but is only striving after it. The distinction is between those found in the external organization who are really united to Christ by faith, the essential condition for real membership in the Church, and those who have made an outward profession, who to all appearances are a part of the Church but who lack real faith. These latter are in the Church but not really of the Church.⁴

The first, the essential Church, is the *coetus vere credentium*. They alone are really members of the Body

⁴Luther sometimes made the distinction between "die wahre Kirche" and "die gemachte Kirche." "Drumb, umb mehres Vorstands und der Kurz willen wollen wir die zwo Kirchen nennen mit unterschiedlichen Namen. Die erste, die natürlich, grundlich, wesentlich und wahrhaftig ist, wollen wir heissen ein geistliche, innerliche Christenheit. Die andere, die gemacht und äusserlich ist, wollen wir heissen ein leibliche, äusserlich Christenheit: nit dass wir sie von einander scheiden wollen; sondern zugleich, als, wenn ich von einem Menschen rede, und ihn nach der Seelen ein geistlichen, nach dem Leib ein leiblichen Menschen nenne; oder wie der Apostel pflegt innerlichen und äusserlichen Menschen zu nennen." *Von dem Papsthum zu Rom., etc.* (Er. 27: 102. Weimar 6: 296-297).

of Christ. The second, the Church in a wider sense, is the *coetus vocatorum*, all those who have been baptized and are in the outward fellowship of the Church. But these are emphatically NOT two Churches. Both classes belong objectively to the same Church; the difference between them is a subjective one. In the *ecclesia large dicta* all have received the same divine grace, all have the same Word and Sacraments, all have been touched by the Holy Ghost, all have received the grace necessary for regeneration, but not all have fulfilled the necessary condition of faith, which is needed to gain the benefits of this grace. Though the opportunity is theirs some have prevented the consummation of the mystical union with Christ through their unbelief. They have been brought into the Church but have refused to become part of the Church. To use an architectural figure, they may be said to have entered the building but only as far as the narthex, they have not passed into the nave and they have no part in the blessings that are being offered in the sanctuary. They are a part of the *congregatio vocatorum*, but they do not fully share in the *communio sanctorum*. By God's grace they are in the Church; that they are not really partakers of the grace there ministered is their own fault. Those who are true believers have appropriated that grace but both classes are in the Church *large dicta* and neither is to be found outside the *coetus vocatorum*.*

* Sometimes Luther uses an older distinction, when he speaks of the soul and body of the Church as seen in the last sentence of note 8. With him it is only incidental but Bellarmine develops the idea at some length and distinguishes between those who belong both to the soul and body of the Church, those who belong to the soul but not to the body and those who belong to the body but not to the soul. This terminology, however, is just as dangerous as the expressions visible and invisible. It even leads to absurdities, for as Musaeus points out (De. Ecclesia I p. 174), the figure of the Church as the body of Christ is that of a living body, which requires the presence of the *anima* as well as the *corpus*.

These terms, *large dicta* and *proprie dicta*, are not synonymous with the distinction between a visible and an invisible Church that was later imported into Lutheran theology and has remained to plague it to the present day. The Church *proprie dicta* has its visible side as well as its invisible essence. It is true that the number of the elect is invisible, the presence of the Holy Ghost and the divine grace of redemption are all matters of faith but because the essential nature of the Church is only perceived by faith it does not follow that the Church has become a Platonic state or an intellectual figment (Apology, Art. VII). The true, essential Church, the Communion of Saints has its visible side as we shall see in a moment. It must be perceptible. If it were not so Jesus Christ Himself would have been a phantom. The terminology, half true in itself, nevertheless brings with it the danger of falling into a Docetic conception of the Church. It is a fiction that actually imperils the Lutheran doctrine of the means of grace. It is true that Luther used the expression, even before Zwingli, but not in the sense in which it was later used.¹⁰ It has resulted in unfruitful discussions as

¹⁰ See Reinhold Seeberg, *Der Begriff der christlichen Kirche*, p. 91. For Luther the essence of the Church is indeed always invisible but at the same time the Church is always perceptible through the means of grace. It is audible in the Word and visible in the Sacraments: "Die Zeichen dabei man äusserlich merken kann, wo dieselb Kirch in der Welt ist, sein die Tauf, Sacrament und das Evangelium, und nit Rom, diess oder der Ort. Dann wo die Tauf und Evangelium ist da soll Niemand zweifeln es sein Heiligen da, und solltens gleich eitel Kind in der Wiegen sein. Rom aber oder päpstlich Gewalt ist nicht ein Zeichen der Christenheit; dann, dieselb Gewalt macht keinen Christen wie die Tauf und das Evangelium thut; darumb gehoret sie auch nicht zur rechten Christenheit und ist ein menschlich Ordnung." *Vom Papstthum zu Rom*. (Er. 27: 108. W. 6: 301).

to the priority of the visible or the invisible Church," when they are actually synchronous.¹¹ The later use of the expression is actually an importation from Reformed sources. Among the Reformed the distinction is a natural one. According to their views there are no actual means of grace, there is no unlimited atonement, no assurance of salvation, for that rests ultimately on an inscrutable decree of election, and so there naturally comes into being the idea of an invisible Church, which is the *coetus electorum* or *praedestinatorum*, an entity that is essentially separate and apart from the visible *coetus vocatorum*.

The term "invisible Church" was never really at home in Lutheran theology. Even when it is universally used by the later dogmaticians they are compelled to explain that they do not teach the existence of two Churches. One of the first to give prevalence to the term was Ægedius Hunnius in his *Articulus de Ecclesia Vera*, 1591, the first Lutheran monograph on the doctrine of the Church. In the same year came the posthumous publication of Chemnitz's *Loci*, with the same designation that had evidently been used for some time by Chemnitz in his lectures. From this time onward the term passes into common use, though accompanied with the explanation that only one Church is meant, contemplated from two viewpoints, and that the elect are only to be found in the visible Church. The con-

¹¹ Höfling vs. Mohler. See J. W. F. Höfling. *Grundsätze evangelisch-lutherischer Kirchenverfassung*, 3d ed. p. 3.

¹² The fallacy has been well stated by Köstlin: "—vielmehr ist das die Kirche constituierende Unsichtbare immer zugleich da mit den äussern Zeichen und Mitteln,—der die Gemeine schaffende Geist zugleich mit Wort und Sakrament,—das Wesen der Kirche fällt aber allerdings nie in etwas Äusseres, und wo nur erst Äusseres, Sichtbares ist, da ist noch gar keine Kirche." Julius Köstlin, *Luther's Lehre von der Kirche*, 2d ed., p. 85.

tinual need for such explanations shows how ambiguous and dangerous was the terminology."

The way in which the exact nature of the visibility of the Church is stated becomes an expression of the spirit of entire systems of theology. The Roman system, with its materializing, Eutychianizing tendency attempts to make the Church completely and essentially visible. Its classic expression has been given by Bellarmine in his *De Ecclesia*: "*Ecclesia est coetus hominum eiusdem christianae fidei professione et eorundem sacramentorum communione colligatus, sub remigine legitimorum pastorum ac praecipue unius Christi in terris vicarii Romani Pontificis.*" And this is further developed in the famous statement (bk. III, 2) "*Ecclesia est coetus hominum ita visibilis et palpabilis ut est coetus populi Romani, vel regnum Galliae aut respublica Venetorum.*" Had this comparison been intended merely to stress the fact that the Church is really perceptible it would not have been so bad, but the likeness in Bellarmin's mind was to the political systems he mentions. With him the Church is a judiciary administering the *Nova Lex*. In this particular as in all others the doctrine of the Church is entwined and interwoven with the whole theological fabric.

The Roman conception of the visibility of the Church

¹² There are two outstanding monographs on Luther's teaching concerning the church: Julius Köstlin's, *Luther's Lehre von der Kirche*, and Wilhelm Walther's *Das Erbe der Reformation, Viertes Heft, Luther's Kirche*.

For a thorough discussion of the terms visible and invisible as applied to the Church, see A. F. O. Münchmeyer, *Das Dogma von der sichtbaren und unsichtbaren Kirche*, and Reinhold Seeberg, *Der Begriff der christlichen Kirche* as well as his *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 2d ed. The first named monograph of Seeberg's is particularly valuable, though it has a strange omission. In the very extensive survey of the literature on the subject Ægedius Hunnius is completely ignored.

is determined by the idea of a grace dependent on a clerical order. The Reformed idea of an invisible Church springs from the dogma of predestination, from the thought of a decree of election that is independent of and antecedent to all means of grace, and, in its most extreme form, even to the atonement. The hidden decrees demand a hidden Church and largely diminish the importance of a visible Church. Zwingli even goes so far as to include in his invisible Church some of the heathen. The Lutheran conception of one visible-invisible Church is a necessary corollary to the fact of an invisible grace that is ministered by visible means; that has an objective reality of its own and that is necessary to regeneration, but that requires a subjective appropriation to gain its blessing.

Thus far we have only partly considered the nature of the Church, and a further question confronts us.

II. WHAT IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE EXISTENCE OF THE CHURCH?

The Activity of the Holy Ghost is Essential to the Church

The great fault of most descriptions of the Church, and particularly the practical application of the doctrine of the Church in most theological systems is the undue emphasis that is laid on the human elements of the Church, with a corresponding neglect of the essential divine factor of the Church—the Holy Ghost. For the Church is neither the forum of the politicians, nor the hall of the philosophers, nor an aggregation of those holding certain beliefs, who have gravitated together through mutual attraction, but it is a divine creation, the house of the living God, the temple of the Holy Ghost.

THE CHURCH DOES NOT EXIST APART FROM BELIEVERS WHO
HAVE BEEN REGENERATED BY THE HOLY GHOST

Of course this includes believers who have been regenerated by the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost without believers is no Church, but believers without the Holy Ghost are an impossibility, and no matter how men are banded together or with what titles they might be designated they cannot constitute a Church without God's Spirit. Even a legally incorporated human association for the advancement of the interests of the Kingdom of God would no more be the Church, than a society for ethical research or a department for the study of comparative religions. There are two things essential for the Church: first, the activity and presence of the Holy Ghost; second, the regenerated personalities, but these are absolutely dependent on the first. Where men are unbelieving they are not of the Church because, being unregenerate they cannot be in living union with the Body of Christ.

The matter was well stated by Irenæus (Adv. Haer. I, 5): "*Ubi ecclesia, ibi et spiritus, et ubi spiritus Dei, illic et ecclesia et omnis gratia,*" while a fundamental mistake of much of the dogmatic consideration of this topic has been the practical separation of the two. It may have been only an accident or have been occasioned by considerations of convenience, but it is nevertheless significant that in the threefold division of the Creed, which forms the basis of Calvin's Institutes, the third part should be split in two, so that the fourth part dealing with the Church comes like an appendix considered separately from the doctrine of the Holy Ghost. A similar criticism might apply to many Lutheran dogmatics.

How closely and inseparably these two should be knit together has been splendidly stated by Luther: "Darum ist unser Glaube (Glaubensbekenntniss) so geordnet das der Artikel: 'Vergebung der Sünden' muss stehen nach dem Artikel: 'eine heilige christliche Kirche' und vor dem (vorher muss stehen): 'ich glaube an den Heiligen Geist auf dass erkannt werde, wie ohne den Heiligen Geist keine Kirche ist und ohne heilige Kirche keine Vergebung der Sünden,'" *Von der Beicht, etc.* (Er. 27:351; W. 8:163).

THE PRESENCE OF THE HOLY GHOST IS ASSURED BY THE
MEANS OF GRACE

If the Holy Ghost be present with His grace we have the assurance of God's promises that there will be at least some believers. So the essential proof of the existence of the Church is the proof of His presence. The marks of the Church that prove the presence of God's Spirit are the Word and Sacraments. These divinely given channels of grace are essential to the continuity, the extension and the unity of the Church. The Word and the Sacraments with their vital grace are essential to the Church because, in God's providence, they are the divinely constituted means for the continuation of the mission of Jesus Christ; they are the channels of the divine energy of the Holy Ghost. To destroy or injure the Word is like severing the nerves of a natural body and thus destroying the means of intelligent perception and activity; to destroy the Sacraments or to mutilate them, is like constricting the arteries that bring nourishment and life to the various members. This is particularly the crime of the false subjectivism and individualism of our own day. It has no appreciation

of the sacramental character of the means of grace and lowers them to the plane of sacrificial actions, following in this particular especially the guidance of Schleiermacher.

To make discipline or an apostolic succession one of the marks of the Church, is to substitute natural or incidental functions and even, in the case of the succession, non-essential matters for these essentials required for the existence of the Church. No statement of the marks of the Church is better, clearer or more concise than that found in the Augsburg Confession: "The Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the sacraments rightly administered."

Besides these essentials Scripture has also described certain characteristics which are to distinguish the Church.

III. WHAT ARE THE ATTRIBUTES OF THE CHURCH?

THE CHURCH IS ONE

When Caiaphas unconsciously prophesied the truth that it was expedient for the Lord to die for that nation, John adds the comment, "And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." The Church is not only universal but an undivided unity. In the apostolic band there had been at first not only a certain narrowness towards outsiders, particularly towards Samaritans and Gentiles, but also a certain spirit of rivalry and jealousy between themselves. The first lesson they had to learn as a company was their common equality, their equal dependence on their Lord and the organic fellowship that was established between them

through their relation to the Master. There was no place among the Twelve for individualism, but there was a bond of union in one Master, one truth, one purpose, one grace, one fellowship, and communion divine. Judas was the only exception, and he made himself the exception.

So, as the original band of disciples has multiplied and is dispersed over the whole earth, and assembled in innumerable congregations, the unity still remains the same. There is still only one fold and one Shepherd. That the Lord has promised His presence wherever the two or three are gathered together in His name does not mean the exaltation of the local congregations into independent and separate entities, but is only a pledge of their participation in all the blessings of the one Church and an assurance of their articulation in the Mystical Body of Christ. Throughout the Church universal remains the unit. Each congregation may possess all the fulness of the Gospel, with all its saving grace, and all the powers of the Church, but it does so because it is a fraction of the Church where each part is on an equality and where the common possession belongs to each one, and where what belongs to each one belongs to all. For there is ever *one* Church, existing in many parts. This Church is not an arithmetical sum total of its congregations, but a unit of which each congregation is a fraction. True, each congregation possesses all the powers of the whole Church, in so far as the matter concerns only that congregation. When it concerns the whole Church as in matters of doctrine or even of common practice, as it involves relations to other congregations or the common good of all, the single congregation cannot claim what belongs to the totality of congregations. Too much stress cannot be

laid on the unity of the Church at this day, when a false congregationalism seeks to exalt the single congregation at the expense of the whole Church, and when a distorted independency tries to make the Church a mere collection of congregations, instead of realizing that each congregation is only a portion of the whole Church. Even as extreme a theologian as Höfling whose teaching concerning the Church and ministry has not been helpful to a proper regard for either, recognizes that danger. It may be well to let him speak the warning. "At all events," he says, "the *independency* of the single congregation is not what follows as a consequence of Protestant principles, and consequently, our Church, from the very beginning, rightly provided that for each territory, at least, a common legal order, a common code of laws and a supreme administration was recognized and became operative. Just as it contradicts the idea of being a Christian to be a solitary Christian, so it contradicts the idea of the Christian congregation to be only a single or a local congregation. Even when there is only a single Christian in a given place he already includes the idea of a congregation and the purpose of forming a congregation and with this also the idea and purpose of the Church. While the whole Christian Church was still limited to the local congregation at Jerusalem, it already stood in an essential distinction over that local congregation. The Church does not grow out of the idea of the congregation, but in exactly opposite fashion, the congregation is born, in an organic way, of the Church. As the Church only comes into existence in the individual Christian and congregation, so the opposite is true, that these only come to their full Christian and churchly ex-

istence as they are included in the universal Church. (*Kirchenverfassung*, p. 22)."

Between the various parts of the Church there is not only the perfect bond established by the common mystical union with Christ, but unity also finds expression in a common confession. The Lord has not only demanded that individual followers should confess Him but He has pointed out that there is need of a common collective confession by the whole group of disciples, as well as an individual one. Here also all are to be alike and undivided. The confession of Peter is to be the confession of the whole Church. That confession was the first creed of the Church and all subsequent creeds have had a similar origin, growing out of the command of the Lord, and occasioned by the opposition of a hostile world. Faithful disciples must confess the common faith in the face of the denials and attacks and heresies of false teachers. Thus regarded, as the good confession of the united believers in the Church, creeds become not only human documents, but as they confess the truth once delivered to the saints, and as they are the result of a faith that has been divinely worked in men's hearts by the grace of God, they are also, in so far, the work of the Holy Ghost.

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of the common creed for the unity of the Church. The unity of the Church results from the common union of all its

"How an older generation stated the matter is best illustrated by the remark of Musaeus: "Habet quidem Ecclesia etiam suas locales et corporales congregationes conventusque, in quibus Verbum Dei docetur, et Sacramenta administratur; quibus Christus quoque suam gratiosam praesentiam promisit; ubi, inuens, *duo vel tres congregati sunt in nomine meo, ibi adero in medio ipsorum*, Matt. XVIII, 20. Verum hae congregationes Ecclesiae essentialia non sunt. Instituantur enim statis temporibus, ad peragenda sacra, et iis peractis dissolvuntur." *De Eccl.* I, p. 117.

members in Christ, through faith. But the *fides qua creditur* can only spring from the *fides quae creditur*. Therefore to keep the confession of the objective faith undivided is of such paramount importance for the unity of the Church. Pure doctrine does not assure a pure personal faith but it is nevertheless the best basis for such a faith. Such personal faith may exist in individuals in spite of error and false doctrine, but if it is to be kept alive in the Church as a whole it must be by the common confession of the true faith. Nothing is so destructive of personal faith as false teaching. We can best state it perhaps in Köstlin's paraphrase of Luther's teaching on this question: "And since the faithful are begotten through the Word it is all important for the fundamental existence of the Church that the Word be maintained uncorrupted and that really sound doctrine be drawn from it. This being the case there is always in the Word itself the necessary power by which everything impure in life or conversation that might creep in can and must be eliminated; 'for where the teaching is false the life cannot be amended, but where the teaching is maintained in its purity it is always possible to correct the life and counsel the sinner' (Er. 44:95; W. 47:290)." *Luther's Lehre von der Kirche*, pp. 86-87.

THE CHURCH IS HOLY

The holiness of the Church does not require much discussion for the holiness of the mission committed to the Church should be a matter of course. Every ethical teaching of Christ and the Apostles emphasises that demand for holiness. The grace of sanctification is given in the Church. The final completion of her work will

be the perfect holiness of her members. In her the Holy Ghost is the living principle and the holiness of Christ is the justification of all within her fold. If it were not to give back holiness to those who had lost it there would be no meaning in the mission of Christ or of His Church.

Only two facts must be noted. There is a continual need of guarding against a Donatistic conception of that holiness on the one hand and against a compromising attitude towards the world on the other. One makes of the Church a sect and the other secularizes it. The holiness of the Church is bound to provoke a certain antagonism from a world, that always remains the world, and that lieth wholly in wickedness. The dream of a theocratic government of the world by a Church-state, which always involves some kind of a concordat between the world and the Church, whether indulged in by Gregory VII or by John Calvin, is in the end destructive of the true holiness of the Church. The Church is to be the ethical leaven of society, but from the world that is unwilling to be regenerated it must remain separated. It is in the world but not of the world. So heresy tries to eliminate this distinction and in a false catholicity loses its holiness, and ultimately its consciousness of the necessity of the Church for salvation.¹⁵

THE CHURCH IS CATHOLIC

The Church is as universal, as worldwide as the mission of Christ. It is not bound to any self-selecting

¹⁵ A very interesting monograph on the terms heresy and sect has been written by Hermann Schmidt in the form of a brilliant historical essay: *Die Kirche. Ihre biblische Idee und die Formen ihrer geschichtlichen Erscheinung in ihrem Unterschiede von Sekte und Haerese*. Leipsic, 1884.

membership, nor to the choice of ecclesiastical authorities, to any place or language (not even to Latin, or German, or English!) nor to any particular place, not even to the Bishopric of Rome. The great missionary commission given the Church, the very fact that it is a continuation of the mission of Jesus Christ, makes it catholic, and because it is catholic it must reach out to all nations and all conditions of men. It is also a catholicity that includes all ages. Begun on Pentecost the Church Catholic must transcend the bonds of time as well as those of nationality. What will be established tomorrow, or what began today or yesterday cannot be the Church of Christ. The perpetuity of the Church is only her catholicity regarded under the category of time. But this catholicity does not mean diversity of faith, it does not destroy the essential unity of the Church that it has existed through the ages and among various nations. Quite the contrary, it presupposes that unity as the basis of a real catholicity. It is the one and same Church that is universal, were it changed it would cease to be universal. So the term catholic as applied to the Church that has always existed with the same essential faith in all places, soon came to have a secondary meaning; it became a designation of the true confession, the true faith, the true teaching which is characteristic of the Church. It came to signify the Church's fidelity to its basis of unity under all conditions. Thus catholic also comes to mean orthodox. Frequently this second meaning becomes more prominent than the first. So Musaeus (*De Ecclesia* I, p. 137) considers the two meanings in this order: *Solet enim Ecclesia denominari catholica duplici postissimum respectu. I. In respectu et oppositione ad Ecclesiam heterodoxam et falsam. II. In respectu et oppositione*

ad Ecclesiam, certo aliquo loco aut gente conclusam.

“Priori Catholica Ecclesia idem est, quod Ecclesia vera et orthodoxa et denominatur ita a doctrina Catholica, h. e. ab orthodoxa et vera Christi et Apostolorum doctrina, quae cum haereses in Ecclesia passim invalescerent, differentiae causa dicta est Catholica, quod a Christo et Apostolis tradita, et inde ab ipsorum temporibus per universam Ecclesiam unanimi consensu recepta et credita sit.”

This use of catholic as a synonym of orthodox is by no means modern. For example, Ignatius uses it in the sense of “the one and only,” the first step toward the meaning orthodox.¹⁶

In itself the mere use of a term would not be of such importance were it not for the part it played at the time of the Reformation. Then it was used again and again in the sense of “true,” “orthodox,” and becomes involved in the question as to which is the true Church. Here we face the question as to whether a particular Church can in this sense, claim to be the true Church Catholic. It is a mere matter of history that both the fact and the name were claimed by the Lutheran Church for itself and its teaching. Because of some of the weak and apologetic Lutheranism of modern times it will profit to go into this matter a little more in detail.

The Augsburg Confession insists expressly on its catholicity: “Our churches dissent in no article of faith from the Church Catholic, but omit some abuses which are new, and which have been erroneously accepted by

¹⁶ *Smyr.* 8: 2. See the discussion by Ferdinand Kattenbusch in the *Festgabe—A. von Harnack—dargebracht.* Tübingen 1921, p. 148. For other references to similar usages see Musaeus, *De Eccl.* I, p. 137 seq. Likewise, but taking a different view from Kattenbusch, Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, Part II, I, 414 seq. 621 seq. II, 310-312.

fault of the times." And again, "Only those things have been recounted, whereof we thought that it was necessary to speak, so that it might be understood that in doctrine and ceremonies nothing has been received on our part against Scripture, or the Church Catholic, since it is manifest that we have taken most diligent care that no new and ungodly doctrine should creep into our churches."

Luther is likewise very emphatic in his claims: "Ja, sagen sie, wir Papisten sind blieben in der alten vorigen Kirchen, sint der Apostel Zeiten her; darumb sind wir die rechten aus der alten Kirchen kommen, und bis daher blieben: ihr aber seid von uns gefallen, und eine neue Kirchen worden wider uns. Antwort: wie aber, wenn ich beweiset, dass wir bei der rechten Kirchen blieben, ja dass wir die rechte alte Kirche sind; ihr aber von uns, dass ist, von der alten Kirchen abtrünnig worden, ein neue Kirchen angericht habt, wider die alte Kirche." *Wider Hans Wurst* (Er. 26:12; W. 51:478-479).

"Hiemit haben wir nu beweiset, dass wir die rechte alte Kirche sind, mit der ganzen heiligen christlichen Kirchen Ein Körper und Eine Gemeinde der Heiligen." (Ibid. Er. 26:17; W. 51:487).¹⁷

Melanchthon in the treatise *De recusatione concilii*, 1537, very clearly denies the name catholic to the Romanists:—"quae doctrinam Evangelii puram hostiliter persequitur, non est catholica Christi." The Evangelical Church on the other hand is actually teaching true catholic doctrine: "*Ecclesiae catholicae doc-*

¹⁷ See also Er. 25:222-224; W. 50:512-513; Er. 26:36; W. 51:519; Er. 59:137; W. Tischreden 4:179; Opp. Exeg. 1:320 seq.; W. 42:187 seq.; 2:242 seq.; W. 42:334; 6:116; W. 43:387 seq.; Gal. 2:233 seq.; W. 40, Erste Abt.; 644 seq.

trinam renovamus et illustramus." (Corp. ref. III, col. 313 seq.). In the Apology (Ch. 4) he uses the expression Catholic Church to describe a universality of believers, but in the *Loci*, ed 1535, in the *Locus, De Ecclesia*, he says: "*Additur autem catholica, ut sit aliqua nota, significat enim consentientem de Evangelio quod per Apostolos traditum est. Et sic excludit haereses, et falsas opiniones de ceremoniis, ne putemus ecclesiam alligatum esse certis locis et certis ceremoniis humanis, sed vult nos sentire ecclesiam esse catholicam, hoc est, convenire de doctrina Evangelii etiamsi per totum orbem dispersa, dissimiles habet humanos ritus, etc.*"

Chemnitz also recognized the various significations of the word, distinguishing between its application: "1, *ad locum*; 2, *ad tempus*; 3, *ad populos*; 4, *ad formam doctrinae.*" *Loci*, III, pp. 124-125.

Two statements of the Reformation period are specially significant since each has a quasi-official character and thus they represent the opinion of the Church rather than of individuals. The first is the confessional subscription demanded of those ordained at Wittenberg in 1535 and the following years. Among them we find time and again questions like the following: "*Deinde promittetis, quod velitis manere in puritate doctrinae, quam iam professi estis, et quam Dei beneficio sonant nostrae ecclesiae et quae est doctrina ecclesiae catholicae consentiens cum doctrina prophetica et apostolica. Promittetis igitur, quod velitis esse firmi et constantes et non aliud docere?*" (Paul Drews, *Die Ordination, Prüfung und Lehrverpflichtung der Ordinanden in Wittenberg*, 1535, Giessen, 1904, p. 50 seq.).

Smiliar statements are found in the certificates given those who were promoted to the Master's degree. For example: "*comperimus . . . et recte tenere summam*

pietatis christianae ac amplecti puram Evangelii sententiam, quam Ecclesia nostra Wittembergensis uno spiritu et una voce cum catholica Ecclesia Christi profitetur, et abhorrere ab omnibus fanaticis opinionibus damnatis judico catholicae ecclesiae Christi." Ibid, p. 26.

The second is the declaration found in the Wittenberg Reformation, 1545. There is this statement: "*In qua confessione (The Augustana) doctrinae Deo juvante perseverabimus, sicut illa dextre et sine depravatione intelligenda est, et in ecclesiis nostris intelligitur. Non enim dubitamus, illam doctrinam nostrarum ecclesiarum certo esse unicam, aeternam, consientientem doctrinam verae et Catholicae ecclesiae Christi, traditam per prophetas, Christum et apostolos, et congruentem cum symbolis apostolico et Nicaeno, et veteribus piis synodis, et sententia veteris et purioris ecclesiae.*" (A. L. Richter, *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des sechszenten Jahrhunderts*. II, p. 82).²⁸

²⁸ The literature of the succeeding centuries shows how dear was the idea to Lutheran theologians that their Church is the Church Catholic. The Formula of Concord does not put forth the claim in so many words but the idea is certainly present when it calls the Augsburg Confession "the symbol of our time, whereby our Reformed Churches are distinguished from the Papists and other repudiated and condemned sects and heresies." The Catalogue of Testimonies, Gerhard's *Confessio Catholica* and the *Magdeburg Centuries* were all written or collected to show that the teaching of the Lutheran Church is that of the Church Catholic. The dogmaticians assumed the same position. So Gerhard draws the conclusion from the Seventh Article of the Augsburg Confession that "*Lutherana ecclesia est vera, sincere et orthodoxa ecclesia.*" (*Loci*, Cotta ed. L. 22, 10, par 145) And later (par. 160) he discusses the question, "*An ecclesia Lutheranorum sit catholica?*" and answers it practically in the affirmative. Hollazius (*Examen Theol. Acro*. Part 4, cap. 1, Quest. 37), devotes a whole page to proving that, as far as doctrine is concerned, "*Ecclesia Christiana Augustanae Confessione addicta est vera et Catholicam.*" And so we might go on with others. We find a literary feud being waged between Forer, who denies it, and Nicolai who affirms it, on the question "*An Lutheranorum Ecclesia sit Catholica?*" We find books with titles like these: Hessusen: "*Unterschied zwischen der wahren katolischen Lehre der Kirche und den Irrthümern der Papisten,*" 1564. Mathias

There is no question about the fact that the Reformers believed themselves to be the true Church, the Church Catholic in the sense indicated. Did that mean that they denied the existence of real members of the Church in other ecclesiastical organizations, or in those bodies whose confessions and teachings were not wholly pure or perfectly Scriptural? They very clearly distinguish between the individual Christian and the errors of the hierarchy under which he may be living. If the fundamentals of the faith and the means of grace are still there, then members of the Church are still to be found there, even though the official declarations of the body are not those of the Church Catholic and that title must be denied to its official doctrinal statements. The Apology clearly distinguishes between the people and the hierarchy (Ch. III, Art. 6), "Nor are we immediately to judge that the Roman Church agrees with everything that the popes or cardinals or bishops or some of the theologians or monks approve." Similarly the Smalkald Articles find true Christians even under the Antichrist: "Neither are the Sacraments without efficacy for the reason that they are administered by wicked men? For Paul also predicts (II Thess. 2:4) that Antichrist will sit in the temple of God, *i. e.*, he will rule and bear office in the Church." How completely Luther was of this opinion can be seen more at

Hoë von Hoënegg, "Evangelisches Handbüchlein darinnen unwiderleglich aus einiger Heiligen Schrift erwiesen wird wie der genannten Lutherischen Glaube recht katolisch der Pöpstler Lehre aber im grunde irrig und wider das helle Wort Gottes sei." 1603. In view of all these facts Loehe was certainly right when he said of the Lutheran fathers that they "Never dreamed that any one could charge them with having fallen away from the original, one, Catholic Church.—Over against this apostate (Roman) Church the Lutherans then called themselves Catholic and Apostolic."

length in his commentary on Galatians (Er. 1: 40 seq. W. 40, Erste Abt. 688 seq.).”¹⁹

This was no inconsequence. The presence of true Christians in communions whose teaching is partly in error is to be explained by the same reason as the presence of true Christians in a congregation whose pastor is unregenerate and an evil man. The grace is in the Word and Sacraments, not in the organization, and so the *Ecclesia proprie dicta* may exist in connection with an ecclesiastical body whose official teaching cannot claim to be faithful to that of the true Catholic Church.

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THE CHURCH IS APOSTOLIC

The Apostles were conscious of the fact that they were the bearers of a special revelation from God, as they were to give Christ's teaching to the world and were guided by the Holy Ghost in its understanding. Accordingly they demanded recognition of the divine authority of their teaching (Eph. 3: 5; II Thess. 2:15; II Peter 3: 2; Jude 17). Timothy is especially admonished to continue in the apostolic teaching (II Tim. 1:13; 3:14), while both Paul and John speak of the Church as founded on the Apostles (Eph. 3:20; Rev. 21:14).

¹⁹ Another interesting statement of Luther's along the same lines is found in the little treatise "*Von der Wiedertaufe, an zwei Pfarrhern*", 1528. This pass age throws a sidelight on the reason for Luther's conservatism in the work of the Reformation. "Christus fand auch in jüdischen Volk der Pharisäer und Schriftgelehrten Missbrauch: aber er verwarfs darumb nit alles, was sie hatten und lehrten, Matth. 23: 3. Wir bekennen aber, dass unter dem papstthumb viel christliches Guts, ja alles christlich Gut sei, und auch daselbs herkommen sei an uns: Namlich wir bekennen, dass im Papstthum die recht heilig Schrift sei, rechte Tauf, recht Sacrament des Altars rechte Schlüssel zur Vergebung der Sund, recht Predigtamt, rechter Katechismus, als zehen Gebot, die Artikel des Glaubens, das Vater Unser. . . . Ich sag, dass unter dem Papst die recht Christenheit ist, ja der recht Ausbund der Christenheit, und viel frummer grosser Heiligen." (Er. 26: 257-258. W. 26: 147).

That is another way of insisting on the historic character of the Church, which is established on historic facts, attested by special witnesses, who have been called for that purpose and who are especially endowed to understand and interpret these facts. The Church not grounded on the Apostles and their testimony is a pure fiction.

If the Church then is to be the continuation of the mission of Christ it must also be a continuation of the work of the Apostles, who witnessed and interpreted the Revelation made by Jesus Christ. So the Church continues to impart the revelation of God, but *not* by increasing or amplifying it. If she attempted to do so she would cease to be truly apostolic. The original revelation was not given by the Church but to the Church, through *individuals* selected by God. The Church indeed becomes a witness to the truthfulness of the records and to the authenticity of what has been transmitted in the Scriptures, and she is charged with their publication, but is not their author nor is she called upon to amplify them. Not the production of revelation but its publication is the Church's work. Though the understanding of this revelation must grow with the experience of the centuries, the revelation itself is apostolic—an historic finality.

In passing it may be of interest to note the unapostolic and unhistoric character of Rome. The individuals by whom revelation has been imparted were always selected directly by God, never, like a pope, by the Church. On the other hand, the same Divine Spirit, who moved holy men of old, still guides the Church in the recognition, understanding the teaching of revelation, in its defense and in its preservation as in the determination of the Canon of Scripture and in the formulation of the

scriptural confessions. But this work belongs to the Church and not to individuals, even when certain individuals are the moving factors, they never operate alone. No individual framed the Canon, nor promulgated a Creed on his own authority. So the fiction of an infallible papacy only serves to demonstrate afresh the unhistoric character of the system of which it is a part. By its self-exultation the papacy has ceased to be apostolic.

The apostolic foundation of the Church was a revelation given through certain persons but through them was given to all and became the common property of the whole Church. First given personally it became universal. Now it is the mission of the Church to bring to each individual this common possession. The universal truth, by the ministration of the Church, again becomes a personal gift to each individual. This individualizing of the Gospel is furthermore particularly the work of certain individuals, who represent the Church in that work.

IV. WHAT IS THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH?

THERE IS A DIVINELY INSTITUTED OFFICE OF THE MINISTRY

No particular hierarchy is anywhere enjoined for the Church, nor is any form of government prescribed. Of a mediatorial priesthood there is no hint. There is only the distinction between teachers and those taught, which appears as an extension of the work of the original apostolate.

That extension is apparent in the New Testament. While the original Twelve remain the bearers of a unique commission that is only shared, as a result of the special vision given him, by Paul, and while in this

they can have no successors, there are others mentioned as associated with them in the work of teaching, preaching, guiding and ruling the Church. They expressly provide for others who are to discharge such functions locally and stipulate the qualifications they must possess, and they speak of themselves as being such presbyters (I Peter 5: 1, 2; II John 1; III John 1). The only difference is that the future ministry is forever bound to a complete dependence on the testimony of the Twelve, who were personally connected with the life of Christ, and on their interpretation of His mission. So the ministry remains as the final theme in the discussion of the doctrine of the Church.

Unfortunately this is a subject that has been the occasion for endless controversies, and in its wrong development the foundation for countless errors. Here again it is necessary to relate the particular doctrine under consideration to the entire body of the Christian faith. A doctrine may be quite correctly stated, as far as it is considered, and still be nullified or distorted by false teaching on some other point, and no doctrine will be fully understood or grasped in the proper perspective unless it is held in connection with the great material principle of Christianity; justification by faith. Throughout the Middle Ages, for example, there were many movements and many teachers who held the Formal Principle of the Reformation, and taught that the Scriptures were the sole rule of faith, but still most of these Biblicists remained faithful to the Roman Church, and effected no real reformation, because they did not fully grasp the doctrine of free grace and justification by faith alone, or else misunderstood the character of the Scriptures. Frequently they esteemed them still as a *nova lex*, and a law, whether spiritual or civil,

demands a police department for its enforcement.²⁰ And what is the Roman hierarchy with its claim of a *potestas jurisdictionis* but a gigantic system of spiritual police!

The desire to escape such an hierarchical system has sometimes led to an opposite extreme and resulted in a degradation of the dignity of the holy office of the ministry or even led to a denial of its divine institution. Those who are most insistent in always seeing the bogey of a priesthood continually forget that neither a mediatorial priesthood nor a judicial hierarchy can exist where the doctrine of justification is clearly taught. As soon as that doctrine is obscured and systems of human meritoriousness take its place a hierarchial system of some sort or other is likely to put in its appearance.

About one thing we must be in the clear. The ministry is a divine institution and not a mere human development out of the spiritual priesthood of all believers. Neither in the Scriptures nor in the Confessions is there any "Übertragungslehre." If the modern conceptions of such transference could be traced to their real sources it might be found that men had been unconsciously applying to the Church certain political theories, and that some of these theories are more akin to Rousseau than to Luther.

Luther indeed is often claimed for such theories but that is only possible by quoting some of his earlier statements without balancing them by those made later in

²⁰ Even Wiclif regarded the Scriptures in this light for he says: "Lex Christi pure per se sufficit regere totum populum christianum" (*De civili dominio*, I, 395). For a wider discussion of this whole question and the proof of the statements made above see, Friedrich Kropatscheck, *Das Schriftprinzip der luthersichen Kirche*, Leipsic, 1904

life. Luther's habit of stating certain truths in their most extreme form on one occasion and then correcting possible misunderstandings at another time, often after his original statements had been misused by fanatics, is too well known to require any demonstration. It was particularly evident in many statements he made concerning the ministry. His first interest was to combat a false sacerdotalism and in so doing he pressed certain statements of Scripture to 'the most extreme consequences, without, however, intending to deny the other side of the question, in fact taking the other side for granted. Then, when he found his position misused by fanatics he supplied the necessary safeguards against their abuses.

Luther fully understood the importance of the office of the ministry and regarded it as an essential part of God's order in the Church. We can best state his position in the words of Köstlin: "Even the individual bearers of the office, though they have been directly called by men nevertheless are still to be regarded as 'Teachers whom God Himself has called, ordained and consecrated.' (Er. 31:219; W. 30, Dritte, Abt. 521). A congregation cannot be conceived of as existing without the pastoral office, since without this office there could be no general guidance or public preaching. As the souls of all Christians are only nourished by the Word of the Gospel and thus are kept in union with the divine Head of the Church, so the individual congregations can only endure as they join themselves to a preacher who publicly preaches the Word to them. On one occasion (Er. 31:123; W. 30, Zweite Abt. 425) Luther expressly defines the 'Christian Church' as 'the number or company of the baptized and of believers, who belong to a pastor or bishop, whether of one city,

or a whole territory or the whole word.''' (*Luther's Lehre von der Kirche*, pp. 74-75).²¹ The statements of the Wittenberg Reformation, 1545, undoubtedly represent the mature views of Luther as well as Melancthon's. There we read: "*Hanc vocem Christus per sese et suos ministros perpetuo sonabit nec opprimi sinet.*"

"*Haec primum dicta sint de ministerio evangelico, ut omnes intelligant, nos confiteri, sicut haec est aeterna et immota veritas: ministerium Evangelii et sacramentorum necessarium esse et ecclesiam ad hoc alligatam esse, nec esse populum Dei aut electos usquam nisi in coetu vocatorum, ubi sonat vox Evangelii et administrantur sacramenta.*" (Richter, *Kirchenordnungen*, II, p. 88 b).

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD AND THE SPIRITUAL PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS ARE NOT THE SAME

Does the office of the ministry destroy the significance of the spiritual priesthood of all believers, or is it a mere variation of the priesthood? Neither one, for they are two things. All Christians are priests before God and they do not require a mediatorial priesthood to intervene between them and God. There is no *character indelibilis* imparted to the ministry that is transmitted from one member of the order to another or that is necessary for the efficacy of Word and Sacraments. All Christians can exercise their sacrificial functions in bringing to God their spiritual sacrifices, all men can gain His forgiveness directly, all can minister sac-

²¹ See further how Luther guards against possible misunderstandings of his earlier statements in *Von den Councilis und Kirchen* (Er. 25: 364; W. 50: 633 seq.) and *Von den Schleichern und Winkelpredigern* (Er. 31: 200; W. 30: Dritte Abt. 522).

ramentally to their fellow men in private, if necessity arises, for the commission to evangelize and baptize, as well as the power of the keys has been given to the whole Church. But from all this it does *not* follow that there is no public office of the ministry in the Church, founded by Jesus Christ, for the public and regular ministration of the means of grace, and for the leading and guiding of the Church, any more than it follows in this country that because political authority resides in the whole people there are therefore no legislators, judges or executives, but that each citizen could assume such functions for himself, whenever he was so minded. The very fact that any right or grace belongs to all means that it is not the unrestricted possession of each one. Just because it belongs to all it must be administered by those who have been appointed to officiate for the corporate body, whether that be the State or the Church. Perhaps no texts have been so abused and misused as the few relating to the spiritual priesthood of believers, except the one that says "*Tu es Petrus,*" which has been equally misapplied by those who run to the opposite extreme. There is no sacrificial priestly order in the Church, but there is a divinely instituted office of the Word and Sacraments. The grace it ministers does not reside in the office bearers, *neither does it spring from the universal priesthood of believers.* It is a gift given to the whole Church and its efficacy comes from the Holy Ghost, working through the Word and Sacraments, not from an order of priesthood nor from a universality of priesthood. All Christians can indeed minister that grace efficiently but not all can do so *lawfully* under all circumstances. For its ordinary ministration God has provided an office, and to that office all Christians are ordinarily bound. The

spiritual priesthood has chiefly to do with the private and individual business of the soul, the ministry with the public and common possessions of the Church, even when they are administered individually. This is the reason for the seeming inconsistency in the difference always made between Baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar. The first is not only more essential to salvation but it is in every way individual in its immediate application. The Sacrament of the Altar, on the other hand, is a congregational participation in Christ, it is a common meal, even when administered privately to the sick, and therefore is always to be administered by the one who as Christ's representative is the minister to and for the whole Church.²²

THERE ARE NO SPECIAL GRADES IN THE MINISTRY

With the elimination of any thought of a sacerdotal ministry, the question of grades in the ministry becomes

²² Once again we will simply summarize the position of Luther in the words of Köstlin: "As zealously as Luther claimed the priestly character for all Christians, just as strictly he limits the exercise of the priestly office. Undeniably the pre-eminent position in distinction to the laity which the office of the ministry attained in the Lutheran Church is connected with Luther's own declarations. (*Luther's Lehre Von der Kirche*, p. 66).

"Just in the epistle to the council of Prague, in which he develops the activities of the spiritual priesthood in such detail, and where he deduces such important practical consequences, he does not advise the Bohemians to celebrate the Holy Communion in their own houses, because pastors were denied them, but advises them to omit it entirely. They could still share in salvation and each head of a household could read the Gospel and baptize in his own family: *Quando id laicis permittit etiam totius orbis consensus et uses*. In the same way Luther expresses himself in the previously noticed letter of 1530 (de Wette V, 39) in the matter of the Linzer Protestants, where he says 'That a housefather should teach his family God's Word is right and proper, and the Word has been committed to each one.' But the Communion, a public transaction, he might not undertake, 'because he has not been called nor commissioned to do so.' If the regular ministry tyrannically deny it to him he can still be saved without it, through the Word." (*Ibid*, pp. 67-68).

relatively unimportant. The New Testament knows of only one office of Word and Sacraments. The elders and bishops are the same persons. For human convenience or greater efficiency there may be gradations of authority. In the administration of the affairs of the Church various details and differing degrees of oversight may be delegated to various individuals or restricted to particular offices but the ministry of the Word and Sacraments remains the same for the least as well as the greatest. There is no more distinction than there was between the positions of the original Twelve.²³

THE CHARACTER OF THE MINISTRY

So the ministry is the office established for the public administration of the means of grace, and, as such, those in that office are the commissioned representatives of Christ. What they bring is not an inherent virtue given them, nor the mysterious functions of some imparted character, but it consists in the ministration to the individual members of the Church of the gifts of grace Christ has given the whole Church. It is the authoritative transmission of the grace of Christ's mission, His forgiveness and strength and comfort being brought to the individual Christian. It is the office established to convey to him the means by which the Holy Ghost touches his soul. As the twelve ministered to the five thousand what Christ alone could provide, so the ministry brings men His gifts. They are His chosen ambassadors to convey the gifts of the Holy Ghost, to mediate to men, by their humble ministrations, His

²³ Hardly any scholar will pretend to find the so-called three orders of the clergy in the New Testament. See, e. g. Köstlin, *Das Wesen der Kirche*, 2d ed. p. 105 seq. and Bishop Lightfoot's *Commentary on the Ep. to the Phil.* pp. 95-99.

eternal mediatorial work. Their voice is God's voice. Their work is God's work. They are the leaders, the guides and the spokesmen in the Church, which is the living continuation of the mission of Christ.

John Calvin once said: "No observation therefore can be more correct than this, that the law is a silent magistrate and the magistrate a speaking law" (*Institutes* Bk. IV, Ch. XX, Sec. XIV). We might borrow the phrase and, *mutatis mutandis*, say, The Gospel is a silent ministry and the ministry a speaking Gospel.

THE INTRODUCTION INTO THE OFFICE OF THE MINISTRY

While it is not possible to prove that ordination is of divine appointment, it is a necessary consequence of the official position of the ministry as the leaders and teachers of the congregations, and as the representatives of the congregations to each other, as well as being the representative of God to the congregations, that under all ordinary circumstances they should be the ones to order the admission of candidates to the ministry, and by their authority give them a part in the same office. As the congregation is incomplete without its ministry and the minister a mere name unless provided with a field of ministration so the two go together to constitute a normal congregation. So the ministry and people, the whole congregation and the ministry representing the universal Church, as well as the local congregation, should have part in providing for the continuation of the holy office. New Testament usage clearly indicates, so far as the subject is mentioned, that the call ordinarily came from the people and then was confirmed by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, except that in the missionary stages of the

Church's existence, the ministry frequently on their own authority ordained the elders in various cities. Never, however, do we find men entering the ministry without some commission from those already in that office.²⁴

The apostolic succession of special rights and powers, inhering in certain persons is a pure fiction, for the true apostolic succession is not a succession of persons, like the line of succession in a royal family, but it is the continuation of the divinely instituted office of the ministry. Just as judges in our commonwealths may be sworn into office by other judges, though elected by the people, and this does not constitute a personal succession of the judgeship, so ordination to the Holy Ministry is not the transmission of a personal charism but it is the proper official commission of the Church, given by the chosen officials of the Church, who have received their election from the people, but their authority from God.

²⁴ For a detailed account of the position of the Reformers concerning ordination see Georg Rietschel, *Luther und die Ordination*, Wittenberg, 1883, and the treatise of Drews (*Die Lehrverpflichtung*) cited above.

THE AUTHORITY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE IN THE EARLY CHURCH

CHARLES M. JACOBS

There are few subjects that are more deeply involved in the religious discussions of the present day than is the authority of Holy Scripture. It matters little in what field the discussion may arise, whether in the dogmatical or the ethical, the apologetic or the practical, it is bound, sooner or later, to touch upon this theme. It may be a discussion of the limits of non-resistance or of the Christian idea of God, but at some time in its course the question is certain to arise, "What value is to be attached to the utterances of the Bible on this subject? Are they to be regarded as authoritative? If so, are there any limits to that authority, and if there are limits, where are they to be placed? What is the source of that authority and how is it to be determined?"

It is not the purpose of this study to answer these questions. The determination of the extent and the nature of the authority which the Holy Scriptures possess may be left to the systematic theologian. The present writer's task is simpler. It is merely to discuss, in a brief historical sketch, the views that were held in the earliest days of the Church concerning the authority of the Scriptures, and to trace, so far as may be possible within the limits of such a study, the sources of these views. We shall find these sources to have been psychological rather than historical or

metaphysical. Indeed the whole problem of the authority of Scripture presents itself to the historical mind as a problem in Christian psychology. For the doctrine of Holy Scripture, however, fundamental it may be to theology, has never been primary to faith, and the particular view of the Scriptures which any man holds has always been a result of faith before it becomes a cause of faith.

1. THE SOURCE OF TRUTH ACCORDING TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

The truth which the New Testament declares is regarded by its writers as *divine truth*. With but few exceptions, we find them making no claim to direct inspiration. Indeed, the term "inspiration" is found but once in the New Testament, and in that one case it is possibly a mistaken Latin translation of a Greek word that had another meaning.¹ Paul² and John³ do indeed claim to have received messages directly from God, or from Christ, but they do not speak on that account, with any higher authority than do the writers of I Peter or of Hebrews. The fact is that all of the New Testament writers are certain that it is God's truth which they are setting down, and they expect their readers to accept it as such. It comes from God and is, in some sense, His revelation. God is its ultimate source.

But this truth, of which God is the source, comes to men through three channels. The channel through which it comes does not give it its divine character. That belongs to it because it originates with God. The

¹ II Tim. 3: 16. Cf. Cremer, in *Realencyk*,² ix, 184.

² As for example in I Cor. 7. Compare vv. 25 and 40.

³ Revelation, *passim*.

truth that comes through one channel is no more divine than that which comes through either of the others. Nevertheless, the channels are different.

The first of these channels is Jesus Himself. His utterances are regarded as containing divine truth in the highest degree and the fullest measure. This estimate upon them was a necessary consequence of the estimate which the disciples placed upon Jesus.⁴ "God hath spoken unto us in His own Son" (Heb. 1:2) is the fact which the author of Hebrews assumes as a common-place of Christian faith. The Johannine literature uses "Word of God" as a designation for Jesus. While the term is of philosophical origin and contains metaphysical implications, its use rests on the conviction that in Jesus there has been direct communication between God and the world.

How early the sayings of Jesus may have been reduced to writing and just when the written sayings began to be gathered into collections of logia, it is impossible to say; but it is altogether certain that such collections were made at a very early date and that one or more of them lie at the basis of our synoptic narratives. These sayings possessed from the beginning a unique authority. Jesus claimed that authority for them. "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time but I say unto you" (Matt. 5:21 f., 27 f., 33 f., 28 f., 43 f.) is such a claim. It declares that Jesus' words supersede all other interpretations of the decalogue. This claim reaches its pinnacle in words of Jesus, recorded by John, such words as "I am the

⁴ The most recent study of this estimate, by A. C. McGiffert, *The God of the Early Christians* (1924), contains many statements from which the present writer dissents, but is interesting as a presentation by a liberal theologian of the arguments for the belief of the first Christians in the complete deity of Jesus.

Truth" (John 14:6). Moreover, the authority which Jesus thus claimed for His words was acknowledged by His disciples. The words with which the Epistle to the Hebrews open place the authority of Jesus' sayings above the highest authority that has been known before, "God, who in divers parts and in divers ways, spake in times past by the prophets unto the fathers, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His own Son" (Heb. 1:1, 2). Similarly, the introduction to the Fourth Gospel ascribes to Him, and by implication to His sayings, supreme authority,—“No man hath seen God at any time, the Only-begotten Son—hath declared Him” (John 1:18).

It is to be remembered, however, that the authority thus claimed for Jesus' words is only one aspect of the authority that belongs to Jesus as the Son of God. It does not rest upon any theory of the inspiration of the record. When John writes: “That which was from the beginning, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we have heard, that we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life . . . that declare we unto you” (I John 1:1, 3), he does indeed distinguish between the revelation, which is Jesus, and the record, or transmission, of that revelation, which, in this case, is the words of John himself. But the truth which is to be communicated is the truth that is in Jesus; that is to say, it is the divine truth of which Jesus is the embodiment, and therefore the channel. Whatever can be credibly established as a word of Jesus, that is to be received by Christians as the truth. This kind of reception given to the words of Jesus is, of course, a consequence of faith in Christ.

The second channel through which the divine truth comes to men is *the Old Testament*. Jesus expressly

recognized it as a source of knowledge and constantly appealed to its authority as a revelation of the mind and will of God.⁵ The care which He took to fulfil with literal exactness such Messianic prophecies as that of Zech. 9:9 (cf. Matt. 21:1 ff.) is only one aspect of this appeal to the Old Testament Scriptures.⁶ In this valuation of the Old Testament He only concurred in a conviction which the whole Jewish people shared. It was, therefore, not directly from Jesus, but from a Jewish tradition, accepted by Him and supported by His authority, that the New Testament writers derived their view of the authority of the Old Testament. Matthew sets his picture of Jesus, the Messiah and the Founder of the Kingdom of God, in a framework of Old Testament prophecy. The other New Testament writers use Old Testament quotations and allusions continually. The missionary-preaching of the earliest days, as shown by the sermons in the Acts,⁷ was based upon Old Testament prophecy. Even for Gentiles, the Old Testament is "the Scriptures" and a word quoted from the Old Testament is "a scripture."

To be sure, the New Testament writers are conscious that they possess more than this one source of truth. The truth which has come to them through one or both of the other channels that God has used modifies their view of the Old Testament. It is for them, as it was for Jesus, primarily a book of prophecy, pointing forward to the completion that has now come. The whole Epistle to the Hebrews is a plea to Jews for the reception of this new source of truth. Both Paul and the

⁵ The passages are too numerous to cite here, but note especially Matt. 5:17 ff.

⁶ See the particularly fine passage on Jesus' attitude toward the Old Testament in Feine *Die Religion d. N. T.* (1921), pp. 27 ff.

⁷ Acts 3:18, 22 ff.; 10:43; 19:28; 8:30 ff.; 13:27, 33 ff.

writer of Hebrews have to show that Christianity is a new religion. It is not a reformed Judaism. But both of them contend that in accepting the new, men are discarding no really valuable elements of the old. They can afford to throw away the chaff, if they have the wheat. In a word, the connection between Judaism and Christianity is historical. The one is the historical antecedent of the other. In every historical process, the consequent phenomenon is vitally related to the antecedent. The two are organically connected, and the bonds which unite them cannot be severed without destroying the very thing which it is desired to preserve. It might be argued that having the new, we no longer need the old. That argument was afterwards advanced by the Gnostics and by Marcion, but they succeeded only in producing travesties upon Christianity. In a different, and even more extreme form, it was advanced by Mohammed when he claimed that the Koran superseded both the Jewish and the Christian Scriptures. The view of the New Testament writers is that, having the new, we have the old, deepened, enriched, extended and completed, and therefore more worthy of acceptance than ever. Because they regard it in this way, they can continue to accept the Old Testament as a source of truth.

It should not be forgotten, however, that the attitude of the New Testament writers toward the authority of the Old Testament differs in one very important respect from their attitude toward the authority of Jesus. The authority of Jesus resided in a living personality; the authority of the Old Testament was resident in *written records*. These records did, in certain cases, claim for themselves immediate divine origin. Jahweh Himself, or the Spirit of Jahweh has told the authors what to

write, and they are merely setting down what they have heard from Him. In other cases the message of Jahweh has been delivered orally and then recorded by others than the man who received it. But there are large areas of the Old Testament which do not make any such claim for themselves. Such areas are, for example, the historical books and the Psalter. Now, however, the ascription of divine origin is widened to include the whole Old Testament Canon. This enlargement had already taken place in Israel, and Christianity simply took the idea over from cotemporary Judaism. The principle is established that "No prophecy ever came by the will of man, but men spake from God, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Pet. 1:20). The use of the Old Testament by Jesus, by the Evangelists, by Paul and by the author of Hebrews shows that this principle was broadly interpreted to cover the Law and the Psalter, as well as the prophets. The whole body of the Old Testament Canon was regarded as coming from God.

The third channel through which the truth of God comes to men is the *Holy Spirit*. It is, perhaps, truer to say that it is individuals upon whom God bestows the gift of truth, and this bestowal is the work of the Holy Spirit. The disciples had the word of Jesus, "When the Spirit of truth is come. . . He will lead you into all the truth" (John 16:13) and they believed that, from Pentecost on, that promise was going into fulfilment. Doubtless the conviction of immediate inspiration was more vivid in some congregations than in others. It apparently reached its maximum intensity at Corinth, but that it was wide-spread admits of no doubt. Indeed Paul seems to lay it down as a principle that no Christian is without some direct endowment of

the Spirit, and includes among the gifts "the word of wisdom" and the "word of knowledge."⁸ It is such gifts that make some men apostles and others prophets. Paul has himself received "revelations of the Lord," but he does not think of those revelations as giving him a unique position among his fellow-Christians, for he implies that others, too, have had the same kind of revelations.⁹ Thus Paul thinks of the Church as containing men to whom the truth is coming directly from God. There is not the remotest suggestion that the authority of this truth is of any lower order than the authority of the Old Testament. There is, therefore, a living authority which is daily adding to the store of divine truth that men possess. That is the kind of authority which is clearly and distinctly claimed for the Book of Revelation (Rev. 22:18 f.). The solemn warning against adding to or subtracting from the contents of the book may point to a date when this kind of authority was losing its general hold upon the mind of the Church.

But in spite of the numbers of the Spirit-endowed teachers, there remained a small number of individuals whose utterances had especial weight. They were the founders of churches, the "apostles" in the broad sense, and among them especially the Twelve. There is no intimation that the Twelve were regarded as "inspired" in any exclusive sense. Indeed, Paul's whole argument for his own apostleship¹⁰ speaks against any such view. On the other hand, they were the men who had proved the authenticity of their Gospel by the fruits it had borne, and who had had unusual human oppor-

⁸I Cor. 12-14, esp. 12: 8, 28, 29. Cf. Eph. 4: 7-11.

⁹II Cor. 12: 1 ff. Cf. I Cor. 2: 10; Eph. 3: 5.

¹⁰II Cor. 11-12.

tunities to know the facts of the life of Jesus, and were therefore especially competent witnesses. Out of this circle, there had emanated before the middle of the first century, a well-defined tradition, to which Paul more than once appealed.¹¹ The content of that tradition was apparently the main facts about the life of Jesus, especially His death and resurrection, together with certain fundamental ethical teachings. This tradition, in written form, was doubtless the germ of our Gospels. Its importance for the subject of our study lies in the fact that it was something fixed and definite, not to be contradicted or disturbed by the utterances of the inspired prophets and teachers. It provided a point around which the still fluid teaching of the Church could crystalize.

It was thus, then that the New Testament writers thought of the transmission of truth. It came from God, through the Old Testament, through Jesus and through the disciples of Jesus who had received "the gift." Whatever "theory of inspiration" there may have been was applied only to the Old Testament, for, in the first place, there was no body of Christian writings which possessed unique authority, and, in the second place, "inspiration" was a common thing.

II. THE POST-APOSTOLIC AGE (c. 100-c. 165)

The men who live through a transition from one period of history to another are seldom conscious of any great change. There is no definite time when the old ends and the new begins, but the old merges insensibly into the new. Indeed, the new in history is most often only the development of some one element which the old

¹¹ I Cor. 11: 2; II Thess. 2: 15; 3: 6; Cf. I Cor. 15: 3.

has all along contained, and newness is usually nothing more than a change of emphasis. When we pass out of the apostolic into the post-apostolic age, then, we must expect to find men thinking pretty much as they did a generation or two before, or, at least, to find that the elements of their thinking are the same. They still have their three-fold source of truth, but the emphasis upon the different channels of truth is beginning to shift.

The thought of *immediate inspiration* as a source of truth is beginning to slip into the background. The consciousness that the Spirit is in all Christians is less vivid than in earlier days. To be sure, it has not disappeared. It is still believed that individuals here and there possess the gifts of prophet and apostle,¹² but these individuals are more rare than formerly. The Book of Revelation stands almost on the boundary line that separates the first from the second century.¹³ It is the book which, of the whole New Testament, makes the most outspoken claim to inspiration in the full charismatic sense. Its author sets down nothing that is his own; he only writes that which he has seen and heard in the Spirit's world, remote from the world of sense. Just this side of the same boundary line, well in the second century, we find another book that claims the same kind of authorship. *The Shepherd* of Hermas was written at some time, perhaps at intervals, before 140 A. D. It is a book of visions, and its writer was a Roman "prophet." The truth of its contents is supported by the fact that he has seen and heard the things that he records, and has been instructed in their mean-

¹² Cf. *Didache*, xi, 3 ff.

¹³ It was written no earlier than the persecution under Domitian, 95-96 A. D.

ing by a visitor from on high. It is a dreary book, deriving all its interest from the double fact that it was written when it was and that its utterances may be typical of the sermons of the charismatic "prophets." And yet, despite its deariness, its spiritual poverty, its legalistic view of religion, its involved allegories and far-fetched interpretations of them, the men of Hermas' own generation prized it highly, and it was read in many churches as Holy Scripture." Thus they testified to their belief that the writing of Holy Scripture was not finished so long as there were living men to whom and through whom the Holy Spirit spoke.

Just at the time, too, when Hermas' work was enjoying its greatest popularity, there arose on the Eastern border of the Roman Empire a new religious movement within the Christian Church. Montanism was ultimately branded as heresy and the Montanists became a sect. As a sect, it was wide-spread; there are traces of its existence from Phrygia to Gaul. But in Montanism there was nothing new. In Corinth or Ephesus at the time of Paul most of the Montanistic doctrines would have had a familiar sound. They emphasized the notion of charismatic inspiration as a source of truth, to the exclusion, or at least to the disadvantage, of other sources. Their special doctrines rested entirely on the idea that this charismatic inspiration was still existent in the Church. Montanus claimed that he was speaking "as the Spirit gave him utterance," and the same claim was made by his prophetesses, Prisca and Maximilla. The words that these prophets uttered would seem to have been written down, and circulated

"This use of *The Shepherd* continued well into the third century. Cf. Zahn, *Geschichte d. N. T. Kanons*, I, 327 ff.

as Holy Scripture.¹⁵ The burden of the message which the Montanists proclaimed would not have fallen strangely upon the ears of first-century Christians. It was a simple message,—“The end is near! In preparation for it, the flesh must be denied; the world must be shunned; there can be no compromise with it!” All of these were old ideas, and it is not surprising that Montanism should have made many converts. It was “the old-time religion,” not indeed of Paul, but of many of Paul’s cotemporaries, and it claimed an authority to which Christians were accustomed to give heed, the authority of the Holy Spirit, speaking through the lips of living men. But Montanism was condemned, and the fact that it was condemned is proof that the idea of immediate inspiration as a source of truth had lost, or was losing, its hold upon the fourth and fifth and sixth generations of Christians. In its place there was arising another theory of inspiration, which we shall examine later.

But the Christians of this period also had the Old Testament. All of the second century writers, except the heretics, agree in maintaining that the Old Testament Scriptures belong to the Christians. They have inherited from Paul the idea that the Christians are the people of God,¹⁶ the true Israel. Clement of Rome, writing about 96 A. D., can speak of “the merciful Father, Who hath made us the portion of choice for Himself.”¹⁷ Barnabas declares that “the Lord Himself gave the covenant to us, as the people of the inherit-

¹⁵ The best study of Montanism is still Bonwetsch, *Gesch. d. M.* (1889). On the Montanistic “Scriptures,” see *Zahn*, op. cit., I, 5 ff.

¹⁶ This idea had found classical expression in Gal. 3 and 4. “They that are of faith, the same are sons of Abraham” (Gal. 3: 7).

¹⁷ I Clem. 29: 31.

ance;”¹⁸ and Justin Martyr devotes one whole section of his great *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* to proving that “the true spiritual Israel are we who have been led to God through the crucified Christ.”¹⁹ But if the Christians are the true Israel, then the old Testament belongs to them. It is their book. Justin Martyr was led to Christianity through the study of it, and so also was Tatian.²⁰ Because it belongs to them, they are continually quoting it. Indeed the frequency with which the quotations occur is perhaps the most striking external feature of this early literature. The writers are all Gentile Christians. In certain cases, they are bitterly hostile to Judaism.²¹ They are quick to resent any attempt to impose Jewish ideas upon Christianity.²² And yet the sacred writings of the Jews are their most cherished possession. They are *the* Scriptures, and they are made the basis not only of “doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness” but also of argument. They are the proof that Christianity is the one and only true religion. Justin Martyr demonstrates to the Jews out of their own Scriptures that a right understanding of the Old Testament would force them to accept Christ,²³ and in the Apologies, he proves to the Gentiles, out of the Old Testament, that Christianity is as old as the creation and antedates all the Greek myths and philosophies. He displays an amazing knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures, which he has acquired

¹⁸ Barn. 14: 4.

¹⁹ *Dial.* 11.

²⁰ Justin, *Dial.* 7; Tatian, *Orat.* 29.

²¹ Barnabas is the most conspicuous example of this hostility, and yet the Old Testament plays a larger part in Barnabas' letter than in any other writing of the second century except the *Dialogue* of Justin martyr.

²² *Irn. ad. Magn.* 10: 3. “It is monstrous to talk of Jesus Christ and Judaize.”

²³ This is the theme of the *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*.

because he, the Greek philosopher, has become a Christian and the Old Testament is a Christian book."

But the question was bound to arise, "How can men accept the Old Testament as a source of "truth, and at the same time, reject Judaism?" That question the men of the second century answered by their method of interpretation, and this, in turn, was conditioned by their theory of inspiration.

The truth which these second century Christians sought in the Old Testament was not historical truth. They were utterly unconcerned about that. What they wanted was doctrinal and ethical instruction. The value of the Scriptures lay, for them, in their prophetic, doctrinal and moral content. A passage of the Old Testament which contained none of these elements had no value to them. But it was not conceivable that any part of the Old Testament should be valueless; therefore, they must be able to find prophecy, doctrine or moral law everywhere in it. This was possible only by the use of allegory, and in the hands of a skilful exegete, the allegorical method of interpretation can be made to work as many miracles as Aaron's rod. Thus Barnabas knows that Abraham was "looking forward in the Spirit to Jesus," when he circumcised the 318 members of his household (Gen. 17:23; cf. 14:14), since in his Greek Bible he found 318 written as TIH, and IH is the symbol of Jesus and T the symbol of the Cross.²⁸ Similarly, the prohibition against pork, in the Levitical law, means,

²⁸ Harnack has not overstated the case when he says: "Christianity never was, and never became, a religion of the book, in the sense in which Islam is such a religion . . . but the book, *i. e.*, in the first place, the Old Testament, exercised such an influence that Christianity did come very close to becoming a religion of the book." *Mission und Ausbreitung*, p. 204.

²⁹ Barn. 9: 7 ff.

“Ye shall not consort with men that are like swine.”²⁶ Justin Martyr is less fanciful, but finds in the fine flour offered in sacrifice a prophecy of the Eucharist, and in the twelve bells on the high priest’s robe, a prophecy of the twelve Apostles.²⁷ Illustrations of this sort could be multiplied.

In the third century, this method of interpretation found in Origen its systematic expositor. He devoted almost a third of his greatest work, the *de principiis*, to the subject of Biblical interpretation. He maintains that the Scriptures have a three-fold sense. The first is the literal, historical sense. It is the least important of the three and, while it serves to edify the simple, its chief purpose is to form a sort of protective covering for the higher senses. It is the *body* of Scripture. The psychic sense is the *soul* of Scripture. It stands midway between the lowest and the highest sense and is discernible to those who have made some advance into the depths of Christian knowledge. The third sense is the pneumatic. This is the *spirit* of Scripture and is its innermost content. It is open only to the perfect Christian. Thus body, soul and spirit are a progression from lower to higher, and the lower exists only for the higher. The historical sense of Scripture ultimately exists, therefore, to be the vehicle of the higher senses, and the psychic sense exists for the spiritual. The perfect understanding of Scripture is the understanding of its spiritual meaning, *i. e.*, its “hidden mysteries,” which are “wrapped up and concealed under the covering of some history and narrative of visible things,” such as the story of creation and the records of battles, “by which certain ineffable mysteries are made known to

²⁶ *Ibid.* 10: 3.

²⁷ *Dial.* 41, 42.

those who know how to investigate statements of that kind.'²⁸

But Origen goes still farther. He maintains that in the historical narratives there are certain "impossibilities and incongruities." There are records of "things which either did not take place or could not take place." These misstatements are not errors, in the ordinary sense, but are the deliberate work of the Spirit, who purposed by this means to force men away from an untenable literal interpretation of Scripture, to its psychic, and ultimately to its spiritual sense. The creation-story is a case in point. The first three "days" of creation are without a sun, and yet they have "an evening and a morning;" the first "day" is even skyless. God is pictured as a farmer, planting trees, and we are told that the physical eating of a certain fruit brings immortality and the same kind of eating of another confers the knowledge of good and evil.²⁹ These statements are obviously not intended to be received as literal historical facts. The law of Moses commands impossibilities. Taken literally it requires, for example, that a man must spend the whole Sabbath sitting in exactly one place (Exod. 16:29). The same reasoning applied to the New Testament, shows that it, too, contains statements that can never have been intended in a literal sense. He specifies the temptation-story and the commandments about plucking out the eye and cutting off the hand.³⁰ He then goes on,—“It was the design of the Holy Spirit to show that we were not to be edified by the letter alone, or by everything in it—a thing that we see to be frequently impossible and incon-

²⁸ *de prin.* iv, 1, 14.

²⁹ *Ibid.* 15, 16.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 17, 18.

sistent; for in that way not only impossibilities but absurdities would be the result; but we are to understand that certain occurrences were interwoven in the visible history, which, when considered and understood in their inner meaning, give forth a law which is advantageous to men and worthy of God," Nevertheless, with these reservations touching the things that are manifestly impossible, Origen believes that "the truth of the history ought to be preserved *in the majority of instances.*"²¹

This theory of interpretation was not the creation of Origen's own mind. It runs all the way back across the second century, to the New Testament itself. We find it, for example, in Paul's allegorical use of the Hagar-story (Gal. 4), of the rock that followed Israel (I Cor. 10:4), and of the veil of Moses (II Cor. 3:13 ff.). On the other hand, it is also true that this method of interpretation was not at all confined to Christian students of the Scriptures. Philo had used it to derive his religious philosophy from the Old Testament, and the Greek exegetes had used it in their attempts to read moral and religious content into the heathen myths. It was in fact, the "scientific" method by which all interpreters of sacred books arrived at their results, and the Christians differed from the others chiefly in the greater sobriety with which they used it. For a scientific Christian thinker to have used the Scriptures otherwise, would have been impossible, just as impossible as it is for a scientific Christian thinker of today to use their method. Nevertheless, it was this method, which resolves facts into symbols, and cares little for historical veracity, everything for spiritual coherence,

²¹ *Ibid.* 19.

that was the precedent condition under which the ancient Church accepted the Old Testament as a source of truth.

This method of interpretation rests upon a belief that the Scriptures are inspired. This belief was generally held, but was not, at first, worked out into a theory of inspiration. It was almost tacitly assumed that "holy men spake from God as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Yet the assumption was not entirely tacit. Clement introduces a quotation from Exodus with the words,—“The ministers of the grace of God spake by the Holy Spirit,” and a quotation from Jeremiah with the statement,—“For the Holy Spirit says.”³² Barnabas uses the formula,—“The Lord says in the prophet.”³³ In one place after another the Apostolic Fathers make use of the regular New Testament formulas, “It is written,” “The Scripture says,” or “It says.”³⁴ They are quoting inspired writings without defining the nature or method of the inspiration.

The theory of inspiration begins with the Greek apologists, Justin Martyr and Athenagoras. Justin says,—“For neither by nature, nor by human conception is it possible for men to know things so great and so divine, but by the gift which then descended from above upon the holy men, who had no need . . . but to present themselves clean to the energy of the Divine Spirit, in order that the divine plectrum itself, descending from heaven and using righteous men like a harp or lyre, might reveal to us the knowledge of things divine and heavenly.” “These taught us nothing from their own human conceptions, but from the gift vouchsafed to

³² I Clem. 8: 1; 13: 1.

³³ Barn. 9: 1 cf. 12: 1.

³⁴ Possibly, “He says,” the Greek verb has no expressed subject.

them by God from above.” Athenagoras is even more explicit. He declares that the prophets, “lifted in ecstacy above the natural operation of their minds by the impulses of the Divine Spirit, uttered the things with which they were inspired, the Spirit using them as a flute-player breathes into a flute.”³⁵ In this theory, then, the recipient of the inspiration is entirely passive. He must be clean in soul, in order to receive the heavenly message, but he needs neither previous knowledge of their subject-matter nor literary skill to record it. All that is necessary is given by the Spirit. The message, when received, is therefore a word of God and the prophet is no more than the medium through which it is passed on to other men. Even those words of the prophet in which he seems to be speaking in his own person are, in reality, words of the Spirit.³⁷

Such a theory was no more original with the Christians than was the allegorical method of interpretation. There is no evidence in the New Testament of any such view of the inspiration of the Old. The nearest thing to it is that immediate inspiration which John claims in the Apocalypse and Hermas in the *Shepherd*.³⁸ But we do find this theory highly developed among the Alexandrian Jews, where Philo was its most distinguished representative, and where it seems to have been borrowed from the Greeks, especially from Plato.³⁹ To be

³⁵ *Cohort. ad Graec.* 8, 10, cf. *Apol.* 1, 31, 36.

³⁶ *Legatio*, 9.

³⁷ Justin. *Apol.* I, 36 ff.

³⁸ See Vis. II, 1; Mand. XI, 7 ff. Cf. Weinelt, *Wirkungen d. Geistes u. d. Geister*, pp. 201 ff.

³⁹ Whether the mantic oracles had any influence upon this Alexandrian theory is a matter of dispute. On the whole subject see Sanday, *Inspiration* (Bampton lectures for 1893, pp. 72 ff; Bethune-Baker, “*Intro. to Early Hist. of Christian Doctrine*,” pp. 43 ff.; Cremer, *PRE*,³ IX, pp. 185 ff.

sure, there is one all-important point in which Justin's theory differed from that of Philo. By Justin the inspirer of the Old Testament Scriptures is identified with Christ. As the Logos, Christ is the active agent of inspiration. However often Justin refers to "the Spirit of prophecy" or "the prophetic Spirit" or "the Divine Spirit" or "the Holy Spirit," it is always the Logos who is the source of truth and knowledge, and no sharp distinction is maintained between the Logos and the Spirit. Indeed, it is scarcely too much to say that the Spirit is only Justin's name for the inspiring Logos. Except for this ascription of the work of inspiration to Christ, the theory of Justin and of Athenagoras is essentially that of Philo.⁴⁰

Besides the dying form of direct inspiration, these second century Christians, therefore, continued to believe that they had a source of truth in the Old Testament, which was inspired by God and opened the fulness of its meaning to those who were able to interpret it by means of allegory.

But these were not the only sources of truth. The words of Jesus continued to be the supreme authority, and along with them went the words of the Apostles, which were steadily taking a higher and higher place. These words were embodied in written documents, and in the second century, collections of these documents were treasured in the churches and read at the services, along with the Old Testament. We are not here concerned with the history of the New Testament Canon or with the question what books were included in it and why. On this point it is enough to say that there is evidence, at the beginning of the second century for the

⁴⁰ Even on this point the deviation is not so great, for Philo, too, had a Logos-theory.

existence and use of nearly all of our canonical books; that these books were generally accepted as authoritative in matters of Christian faith and life; and that there was a fringe of other books in existence, some of which did, and some of which did not, ultimately find a place in the Canon. It is true enough that in the second century the Church did not have *the* New Testament; it is also untrue, for every church did have *a* New Testament, though it was not, in every case, identical with the New Testament which another church accepted.

Concerning these New Testament books there was no theory of inspiration. In that respect, they were still looked upon as different from the Old Testament. They were plain and simple narratives of fact, or statements of truth. There was no difficulty in interpreting them. There was about them nothing of the cryptic character that was universally thought to belong to sacred writings. And yet the Apostolic Fathers and the Greek apologists were continually quoting them. The quotations are in many cases without acknowledgment; the authors simply slip into their own text phrases caught out of some New Testament book. Occasionally, indeed, there is an exception, and Barnabas once introduces a word of Christ with the formula, "It is written;"⁴ but he does it only once, and none of the other writers follows him. Justin Martyr reproduces practically the whole synoptic tradition of the life and teaching of Jesus, except for the parables, but quotes the words of Jesus with only the rarest reference to the book from which he has taken them. The Epistles are alluded to in much the same way. The teachings which

⁴ Barnabas 4: 14.

they contain are those which the Christians receive, and the way of life which they prescribe is the way that Christians follow. Peter and Paul are revered as men whose words have especial weight, because they were Apostles.

Moreover, it is the New Testament tradition, the new truth that has come with Jesus Christ, that gives all of these writers their key to the Old Testament. In Christ Himself, in His life and work and teaching, they see the fulfilment of the Old Testament. It becomes all prophecy, and if the prophecy does not lie on the surface, if the Scripture seems only to tell a story of the past, if it seems only to give laws for the ordering of the life of men, that is merely an indication that they must get below the surface of it, knowing that when they have penetrated into its depths they will find in every word the Christ, whom the "prophetic Spirit" has wrapped up and concealed in language that seems to have no relation to Him.

And yet while the New Testament thus gave them their key to the Old, it was not yet a sacred book, like the Old. It did not become so until the Christians themselves had become divided in opinion and the Church had been forced into its great battles with heresy.

III. THE AGE OF THE ANTI-GNOSTIC FATHERS (150-250 A. D.)

The first great doctrinal crisis within the Gentile-Christian churches was precipitated by the growth of Gnosticism. The battle against the Gnostic teaching lasted for a full century. While it was still in progress, while, indeed, it was only getting fairly under way, Marcion began to preach in Rome a Reformed

Christianity that was not Gnostic, though it had certain Gnostic traits. Before Gnosticism and Marcionism were fully overcome, Montanism⁴² had to be reckoned with. These three heresies were not the only ones that had to be resisted as the second century passed over into the third, but none of the others had the same lasting influence on Christian thought and Christian institutions that the three had, which have been named. For these three dealt with primary things. They challenged the total conception of Christianity that was current in the churches, and declared it fundamentally wrong. They proclaimed a religious revolution, and on no single point were they more revolutionary than on that of the source of truth.

Gnosticism is really a group-name. It includes many varieties of doctrine. But all of the various systems of teaching that are grouped under the name had certain things in common. For one thing, they are all concerned primarily with doctrine, for Gnosticism was, from first to last, a theology. They found this theology in the books of our New Testament, though not in all of them, and those books which they accepted as authoritative they interpreted in such a way as to rob them of their literal meaning. Thus they used the Gospels and the apostolic writings in a manner analogous to that in which the Christians were already using the Old Testament. The allegorical method could find Christ and Christianity anywhere from Genesis to Malachi; the Gnostics could find the Gospels, and especially the Fourth Gospel, full of personifications of abstract ideas. Seeking to make Christianity a universal religion, they endeavored to tear it loose from its his-

⁴² See above, p. 205.

torical roots. It was to be stripped of its historical context, and set forth in the circles of the enlightened as timeless, abstract truth. Within the teaching of Jesus and the apostles this truth was concealed under coverings which the simple-minded might take as literal statements, but which the Gnostic understood to be figures of speech. The Gnostic understood this because he had the key, which had been transmitted in a secret oral tradition.⁴² As for the Old Testament, the Gnostics treated it variously. One, at least, of the Gnostic schools found some truth in it;⁴³ others rejected it entirely. If writers like Justin Martyr or Origen are to be blamed for their handling of the Old Testament; if their allegories make all things possible and warp and twist the clear meaning of the Jewish Scriptures, they must at least be credited with a sane use of Christian tradition. When they studied the Old Testament, their heads might be in clouds as dense as those that covered Sinai, but their feet were on solid ground. The Gnostics, on the contrary, were always in the air. Starting with a group of abstract ideas derived from heathen speculation, they attempted to read these ideas into the Christian record. Thus the record became the mere vehicle of these ideas, and its literal truth a matter of indifference. By the same method of treatment the Greek myths could be imagined to convey the same body of timeless truth as the Gospel of John.

In the teaching of Marcion the problem of the source of truth and the authority of Scripture assumed a more acute form.⁴⁴ For Marcion endeavored to outlaw the

⁴² It may have been reduced to writing by Valentinus. See Zahn, *Gesch. d. N. T. Kanons*, 1, 748 ff.

⁴³ The Valentinians; cf. Zahn, *o. c.* 1, 730 ff.

⁴⁴ The most complete recent study is that of Harnack, *Marcion; Das Evangelium vom Fremden Gott*, 1921.

Old Testament and revise the New. To him Judaism and Christianity seemed two altogether unrelated and utterly contradictory religions. The Old Testament is a genuine revelation, but it is the revelation of the god of this world, the creator, who is not the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The creator-god is righteous, but not loving. The Law is the revelation of his will; the prophecies have reference to a messiah whom he is to send. The whole sphere of his activity is confined to this world. His kingdom is an earthly kingdom. If we would know the religion of the creator-god, we must seek it in the Old Testament, which is to be interpreted literally. Christ, on the contrary, is the revealer of a God who was unknown until He came. He is the God of love and mercy, the good God, and he demands, not obedience, but faith. Law has no place in the Gospel, or before it or beside it. Nevertheless, the Christian writings contain strong Jewish elements. They connect Jesus with the Jewish law, the Jewish prophets and the Jewish god. They represent the life and teaching of Jesus as related at almost every point to the Old Testament religion. Marcion disdains to explain these things away by the use of allegory. He roundly declares them to be corruptions of Christianity, introduced by disciples who did not understand their own Master. Paul alone understood Jesus, but Paul's teaching has been corrupted too; even the text of his letters has been tampered with. Believing that Christianity is a religion of God's love and man's faith, Marcion, therefore, proceeds to a revision and correction of the Christian documents; he reconstructs them, in order that they may be a pure channel of Christian revelation.

Thus Marcion and the Gnostics raised the question, "What is authentic Christianity." The answering of that question, the refutation of Marcionism and Gnosticism and the exposition of true Christian doctrine, was the task that was assumed by a group of Christian writers who lived and worked between 150 and 250 A. D. Their answers necessarily revolved around the authority of Scripture, for it was this that the heretics had called in question. The Church came out of this controversy with a well-defined doctrine of authority. The two most significant members of this group are Irenæus and Tertullian.

Irenæus wrote one great work that has come down to us. It bears the title *Against Heresies*. It is a thorough discussion of the questions at issue between traditional Christianity and Valentinian Gnosticism, with some attention given to other Gnostic sects and teachers, and to Marcion. He grounds his defence of traditional Christianity on the contention that it is *apostolic*. It seems to him self-evident that apostolic Christianity must be authentic. To discover this authentic Christianity, therefore, it is only necessary to go to the writings of the Apostles. In the apostolic Scriptures, whether Gospels or Epistles, Irenæus is thoroughly at home. He uses them with telling effect, to refute the heretics and establish his own doctrines. They are for him *the* source of truth.*

* "The tradition from the Apostles exists in the churches and is permanent among us. Let us therefore go back to that revelation which is taken from the scriptures of those who wrote the Gospel, viz. the Apostles." "Jesus Christ is the truth and there is no lie in Him, and the Apostles, too, are disciples of the truth, and are free from any falsehood" (III, 5, 1). "A sound mind will eagerly meditate on those things which God has placed within the power of mankind. . . . These things are such as fall under our observation and are clearly and unambiguously set forth in the sacred scriptures" (II, 21, 1).

This does not mean that Irenæus has discarded the Old Testament. As witnesses to the truth of his own doctrine, he cites "the preaching of the Apostles, the teaching of the Lord, the announcements of the prophets, the dictation of the Apostles and the ministrations of the law" (11, 35, 4). He declares his doctrine to be "the preaching of the church, which the prophets proclaimed, but which Christ brought to perfection, and the Apostles handed down." Thus Irenæus brings the Old Testament into the same category with the apostolic writings. These Scriptures "are perfect, because they were spoken by the Word of God and His Spirit" (11, 28, 2). Nevertheless, there is a difference between the Old and New Testaments. The Old is accredited by the New. Only because the Old Testament "testified of Christ" can we be sure that the author of its Scriptures is the Father of Jesus Christ" (IV, 10, 1). Here is no a priori doctrine of inspiration, such as we found in Justin and Athenagoras. It is the content of the sacred writings, not the method of their delivery, which marks them as divine. In the relation of the old and new covenants Irenæus finds a progress from the less to the more complete. There are differences in the steps which lead men to God, but there is "one salvation and one God" (IV, 9, 3).

No writer before Irenæus had laid such emphasis on the apostolic writings. He actually reverses the procedure of the earlier fathers. They interpreted the sacred book of the Church, which was the Old Testament, by the body of Christian truth. They found this truth in the apostolic tradition, but the apostolic tradition *as a book* they placed on a lower plane than the Old Testament *as a book*. Irenæus, on the contrary finds his supreme authority in the book of the New Testa-

ment, and by that book he determines his attitude toward the book of the Old Testament. Thus the New Testament Scriptures have not only moved up to a place of equal authority with the older collection, but have gone beyond them. Thenceforth, Christian theology was to be recognized as New Testament theology.

In the formation of his theology, Irenæus does not resort to the method of allegory. His method of interpretation is fundamentally historical. He has seen the havoc that the Gnostics have wrought with their allegories, the absurdities they have based upon Scripture by interpreting it as "parable." He recognizes the danger that is inherent in the allegorical method, the danger that no two interpreters will agree. In place of the allegory, then, he puts a clearly defined canon of interpretation. "The entire Scriptures, the prophets and the Gospels, can be clearly, unambiguously and harmoniously understood by all." This clear and unambiguous statement of truth, he then goes on to say, must become the key to the interpretation of those statements which are intended as parables."

Behind Irenæus' estimate of the New Testament, there is, however, a large assumption that must not be overlooked. It is the assumption that whatever comes from the Apostles is authoritative. But this assumption influences other of his opinions also. For there are in the Church other things that were regarded as apostolic, and if authority is inseparable from apostolic origin, then these other things, too, must have the same authority as the apostolic writings. This line of reasoning appears in Irenæus' use of tradition. "The Church, though dispersed throughout the world, has

"*Adv. Her.* II, 27. This in sharp contrast with the view of Origen above.

received from the Apostles and their disciples this faith" (I 10, 1, cf. V, 20, 1). The "faith" is then defined in a paragraph which has the form of a creed. Then the author goes on, "The Church believes these things as though she had but one soul and one and the same heart; and she proclaims them and teaches them and hands them down, with perfect harmony, as though she possessed only one mouth." (ibid. 2). This "apostolic faith" is not the same thing as the apostolic Scriptures. The "faith" and the Scriptures are two things, not one, though both come from the same source and therefore neither can contradict the other. But when two different things, which cannot conflict, seem to be divergent, the seeming contradiction must be removed by means of interpretation. The question, "Which of the two is the supreme authority?" must be answered by the other question, "Which gives the standard of interpretation?" Are we to interpret the "faith" by the Scriptures, or the Scriptures by the "faith?" Irenæus chooses the latter alternative. All valid interpretation of the Scriptures must be within the "apostolic faith." Man's intelligence and skill, however, great it may be, dare not go beyond the faith of the Church. It may investigate and search and interpret—and Irenæus himself made full use of this permission—but only with the purpose that the results of this work may "be accommodated to the general scheme of the faith." Thus the first Christian writer to raise the New Testament Scriptures above the Old, is also the first to place the tradition of the Church beside them. Indeed, it may be asked whether tradition has not the place of higher authority. It has been said of Charlemagne that "he tied the knot which the whole Middle Ages struggled to unloose." It may be said with equal

truth that Irenæus tied the knot which the Reformation had to cut.

Irenæus tied the knot, and Tertullian drew it tight. He was the first important writer to use the Latin language, and the Western Church has never got entirely away from the influence of his formulations. The whole structure of Latin theology was erected on the foundations which he laid and was built, very largely, out of his materials. Differing widely from Irenæus upon certain points of theology and possessed of a different spirit, he, nevertheless, agreed entirely with his older cotemporary in his view of authority. In Tertullian's writings that view appears in the most pointed form of statement, for Tertullian had the lawyer's mind, which tends to overstatement and loves to press every point against an opponent.

With Irenæus, he identifies authority and apostolicity. In his great book, *Against Marcion*, he states his case as follows,—“I affirm that Marcion's gospel is adulterated; Marcion, that mine is. Now what is to settle the point for us, except the principle of time, which rules that the authority shall lie with that which is more ancient? . . . For, inasmuch as falsehood is the falsification of truth, it must needs be that truth precedes error” (*c. Marc.* IV, 4). This principle, applied to the matter in hand, establishes the authority of apostolic truth. “That is from the beginning which has the Apostles for its authors” (*ibid.* 5). All that Tertullian needs to prove, therefore, is that “that which comes down from the Apostles has been kept sacrosanct in the churches of the Apostles.” Thus the idea of apostolicity is laid at the foundation of the argument. Tertullian's appeal to the Scriptures, then, is only one form of the general appeal to apostolic authority.

In his *de praescriptions*, Tertullian's view of the authority of Scripture is set forth in general terms, for in this work he is not discussing any one heresy, but heresy in general. The argument is this,—The Christians have a rule of faith. It is embodied in a form of words (c. 13), and was taught by Christ. Within the faith thus formulated, Christians are free to seek for truth, but nothing which impairs the rule of faith can be received; it cannot even be a subject of inquiry. Until a man accepts the rule, then, he cannot be considered a Christian at all and cannot say what is or what is not Christian. That rules out the heretics, for the heretics are, by definition, those who deny, or "impair," the rule. The heretics dare not quote the Scriptures to support their opinions, for only those who have the rule of faith possess any right to the Scriptures. There are, then, two channels through which apostolic truth has come down to us. They are the Scriptures and the rule. In Tertullian's view, they are equally authentic. This is the identical thought that we have found in Irenæus, and, like Irenæus, Tertullian seems to give prior authority to the rule, for it is the rule by which the Scriptures are to be interpreted.⁴⁸

But the authenticity of the rule is guaranteed by another apostolic ordinance. The Apostles organized churches, which are "wombs and sources of faith" (c. 21). From these original churches "all the other churches, one after another, derived the tradition of the faith and the seeds of doctrine" (c. 20). Therefore "all doctrine which agrees with the apostolic churches must be reckoned for the truth, as undoubtedly contain-

⁴⁸ On the rule of faith see especially the valuable discussions of Seeberg, *Dogmengeschichte*, I, 285, and *Zeitsch. f. Kirchengesch.*, XL (1922), 1 ff., with the literature there cited.

ing that which the churches received from the Apostles" (c. 21, cf. c. 26). It is, therefore, the organized Church which guarantees the authenticity of the rule, and the acceptance of the rule confers the right to possess the Scriptures. Three things are apostolic, the churches, the rule and the Scriptures. Because they are apostolic they are original, and because original, they are authoritative.

The connection of authority with apostolicity would seem, logically, to exclude the Old Testament, but Tertullian does not draw this conclusion. Throughout the book against Marcion he contends that the Creator and the Father are one and the same God. In the *Apologeticus*, written for heathen readers, he definitely claims the Jewish Scriptures as the possession of Christians, though he makes far smaller use of the "proof from prophecy" than had Justin Martyr. All men have some knowledge of God, either from the creation or from the *testimonium animae naturaliter christianae* (c. 17). But God has "added a written revelation." This was the work of chosen preachers, "men abundantly endowed with the Holy Spirit." "These preachers are called prophets, from the office, which belongs to them, of predicting the future. Their words, as well as the miracles which they performed that men might have faith in their divine authority, we still have, in the literary treasures which they have left. . . . Whoever gives ear will find God in them; whoever takes pains to believe will understand" (c. 18). Tertullian offers to prove that these Scriptures are divine. He makes his offer good by citing the great number of Old Testament predictions that have been fulfilled. "While we suffer calamities, we read of them in the Scriptures," and "the truth of a prophecy is the

demonstration that it is from above." The fulfilment of prophecy is, therefore, the basis of the belief that the Scriptures are inspired (c. 20). Paul was "guided by the same Spirit by whom all divine Scripture, including the book of Genesis, was drawn up" (*de orat.*, 22).

Tertullian, like Irenæus, makes relatively little of the fact of inspiration. In his later years he was a Montanist, and the Montanistic belief in the continuance of inspiration may have influenced, to some degree, his earlier thought on this subject. At all events, the antiquity of the Scriptures seems to play a larger part in his thinking than does their inspiration. But this is only apparently the case, for the notion of inspiration is involved in that of apostolic origin. The Apostles had the Spirit, and whatever comes from them has the authority of inspiration. Thus the Scriptures and the rule are both inspired, and in a certain sense the organized Church also. On this point Tertullian was in agreement with Irenæus' words,—“Where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God, and where the Spirit of God, there the Church and every grace; but the Spirit is truth.”*

With the acceptance by the Church of these views of Scripture, the foundations were cut out from under the Gnostic and the Marcionitic heresies. The principle was established, “Whatever is apostolic is Christian; whatever is not apostolic is not Christian; between two apostolic traditions there can be no conflict.” As applied to the Scriptures, that meant a sifting of the tradition, and a disappearance from the Church's use of those Scriptures, like *The Shepherd* and the *Epistle of*

* *Adv. Her.* III. 24, 1.

Clement, which could not claim apostolic authorship. It became important to know the name of the writer of a given book, and the literary history of the New Testament writings became a matter of vital interest. But with this emphasis on the authority of the apostolic authority of Scripture, there came, of necessity, a distrust of immediate inspiration. New prophets were not needed for all that the Spirit wished to reveal was already contained in the apostolic writings. Thenceforth the claim to be inspired was regarded as denial of apostolic authority.

No less significant and influential than the views of Irenæus and Tertullian, just described, were those of Tertullian's younger co-temporary, Origen. He was a man of different training from either of his two great predecessors, for he was raised in the philosophical tradition of Alexandria, and shares with his teacher, Clement, the honor of being the formulator of early Alexandrian Christianity. With this training, and with a most unusual intellectual gift, he became the first great scholar of Christian history. His *First Principles* is the first treatise in dogmatics, but his chosen field of labor was the exegesis of the Scriptures. The authority of the Scriptures is fundamental to all of his thinking. In the Preface to the *First Principles*, he states it thus,—“All who believe and are assured that grace and truth were obtained through Jesus Christ, and who know Christ to be the truth derive the knowledge which incites men to a good and happy life from no other source than from the very words and teaching of Christ. And by the words of Christ we do not mean only those which He spake when He became man and tabernacled in the flesh; for before that time, Christ, the Word of God, was in Moses and the prophets.

For without the Word of God, how could they have been able to prophesy of Christ? And it would not be difficult to show, in proof of this statement, out of the Holy Scriptures, how Moses or the prophets both spake and performed all that they did through being filled with the Spirit of Christ. . . . Moreover, that after His ascension into heaven He spake in His Apostles, is shown by Paul in these words: 'Or do you seek a proof of Christ, who speaketh in me?' "

Here is a clearly defined doctrine of the authority of Scripture, based upon a theory of inspiration. The theory assumes that Christ is pre-existent. He is the Word of God, and therefore the agent through whom the Father works upon the world and the mediator of the whole divine revelation, an office which He did not surrender when He ceased to 'tabernacle in the flesh.' This Christ is the author of the Scriptures, and since they come from Him they must be the truth. To be sure, Origen does not distinguish sharply between the work of Christ and of the Holy Spirit in inspiration. This is due to an inherited unclearness, which we find quite as markedly in Justin Martyr. The agent of inspiration is at one time Christ, at another the Holy Spirit, but the Scriptures are His work.⁶⁰ This doctrine of inspiration was to Origen an article of faith, and primary to all discussions of Christian truth. It applies to the Old Testament, as well as to the New. "It was not only with regard to these Scriptures which were composed down to the advent of Christ that the Holy

⁶⁰ Cf. *de prin.* IV, 9.—"Who believe the Holy Scriptures to be no human composition, but to be written by inspiration of the Holy Ghost and to be transmitted and entrusted to us by the will of God the Father, through His only-begotten Son Jesus Christ." The same unclearness is found in Clement of Alexandria, "We have, as the origin of the teaching, the Lord, through the prophets, through the Gospel, and through the blessed apostles." (*Strom.* VII, 16).

Spirit thus dealt; but, as being one and the same Spirit, and proceeding from one God, He dealt in the same way with the evangelists and Apostles. For even those narratives which He inspired them to write were not composed without that wisdom of His, the nature of which we have explained" (*ibid.* 16).

The fact of inspiration is proved by the fulfilment of prophecy. "The divinity and inspiration both of the predictions of the prophets and the law of Moses have been clearly revealed and confirmed, especially since the advent of Christ into the world." But there is also another proof. The Scriptures bear witness to their own origin. "If anyone consider the words of the prophets with all the zeal and reverence which they deserve, it is certain, that, in the perusal and careful examination thus given them, he will feel his senses touched by a divine breath, and will acknowledge that the words which he reads were no human utterances, but the language of God; and from his own emotions he will feel that these books were the composition of no human skill, nor of any mortal eloquence, but, so to speak, of a style that is divine" (*de prin.* IV, 6). The authority of the Scriptures, then, is the authority of God.

In spite of the fact that there is thus one supreme and authoritative source of truth, it remains true that all Christians do not agree. To settle these disagreements, Origen believes that the apostolic tradition is final. "As the teaching of the Church, transmitted in orderly succession from the Apostles, and remaining in the churches to the present day, is still preserved, that alone is to be accepted as truth which differs in no respect from ecclesiastical and apostolic tradition" (*de prin.* Pref.). But this tradition is not entirely adequate. Stated in

modern terms, it does not constitute an entire and well-rounded world-view. "The holy Apostles delivered themselves with the utmost clearness on certain points . . . leaving, however, the grounds of their statements to be examined into . . . while on other points they merely stated the fact that things were so, keeping silence as to the manner or origin of their existence" (*ibid.*). Thus, within the apostolic tradition, there is room for progress, though all such progress is conditional upon the student's willingness to accept the authority of Scripture and upon his ability to understand the Scriptures. The latter point is as important as the former, for Origen regarded the ability to interpret Scripture as a special gift of God, a kind of charism.

Origen's theory of interpretation has already been described,⁶¹ but it must here be noted that that theory hangs closely to the doctrine of inspiration which he holds. Every word of Scripture is, by hypothesis, a word of God, but these words of God do not always make sense: they contain "not only absurdities, but impossibilities" (*de prin.* IV. 18); and yet they must be true. The only possible method in such cases is that of allegory, for the language must have an inner meaning that is true, even if the literal meaning has to be discarded. To discover that inner meaning, one must possess the necessary special gift: he must be a Christian of a higher sort, a true gnostic.

Here then we have a doctrine of the authority of Scripture that differs sharply from that of Irenæus and Tertullian. To them authority and apostolicity were inseparable. They connect all authority with the his-

⁶¹ See above, p. 209.

toric Christ. Go back along the line of history, and when you have reached Christ, you have reached the truth. But Christ is known through his witnesses, who were endowed with His Spirit. Whatever they have told us, whether in Scriptures which they wrote, or in oral statements that others may have written down, that is Christian truth. Even the Old Testament derives its value for the Christian only through its connection with the truth which they taught. That truth, both in the form of Scripture and in the form of tradition, has been placed in the custody of an historical institution. That was the doctrine that the Western Church received.

Origen sets the whole doctrine in a different light. Not apostolicity, but inspiration is the foundation of the authority of Scripture; not the historical Christ, but the pre-existent and exalted Christ. This transcendent Logos spoke the words of Scripture, through His Spirit, to the men who wrote them down. Their content, therefore, must be timeless as the Spirit; their real meaning must, in the end, prove to be abstract truth, which can be reached only by discarding literal, and adopting figurative, interpretations. Thus the way is open for Hellenistic thought to pour into the Scriptures, and the Scriptures can be made to speak of all the remote abstractions of Greek philosophy, of "essences" and "natures" and "persons." With all of the abuses to which it was subject, Tertullian's way was better, for despite its exaltation of tradition, it made a literal and historical interpretation of the Scriptures possible. Origen outlawed that interpretation when he declared that every word of Scripture, genealogies and accounts of wars included, was a word of God, a vehicle of spiritual truth.

These, then, are the views of the authority of Holy Scripture held in the early Church. They form the basis of all later developments in the doctrine of Holy Scripture, and in all these later developments the influence of one or another of them can be traced. Tertullian's theory ultimately produced the doctrine of the Church of Rome. The view of Irenæus reappears, in its essential features, in the doctrine of the Protestant Reformation. His strong accent on historicity and on content as the basis of authority, and his insistence that the Scriptures are self-interpreting, find an echo in the language of Luther. The view of Origen, with its roots deep in a theory of inspiration that is, in the last analysis, purely mechanical, became, in the hands of the Protestant scholastics, a powerful logical weapon with which to combat the Roman theory, derived from Tertullian, that the organized Church has the sole right to interpret Scripture, and is itself inspired.

